

# MADE TO ORDER

SHORT STORIES FROM  
A COLLEGE COURSE





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## SHORT STORIES FROM A COLLEGE COURSE

SELECTED BY  
HOWARD MAYNADIER



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**HOWARD MAYNADIER**

## PREFACE

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The gems of narrative here presented to the public were polished, all within a period of a few months, for the greater lustre of one of the courses in "English Composition" in Harvard College. They were modestly intended for none but class-room readers—that is, a privileged audience of about a hundred; but the instructor, feeling that even for his own sake the brilliancy of his pupils should not be hidden under a bushel, has urged them to overcome their bashfulness and offer their productions to a larger circle. In so doing, he has been encouraged by the friendly assistance of the publisher, Mr. Lloyd Adams Noble, late a member of the course for which the gifted authors wrote; and also by the kindly interest of several other graduates of Harvard:—Mr. Charles Copeland of Wilmington, Delaware, Mr. Robert Wheaton Coues, Mr. Douglas Crocker, Mr. August E. Lewis, Mr. William Rhinelanders Stewart, Jr., and Mr. Sumner Welles—all, needless to say, gentlemen of the very finest literary taste.

These friends, and in several instances for-



mer members, of the course, have thought with the instructor that this volume is interesting, if not unique, because of the way in which it came into being. At least they know of no other collection of short stories, now offering themselves in the general market, which were written originally as class-room exercises. For the same reason others may like to read the book; and perhaps others still, who, whether or not interested in the study of "English Composition" in our colleges, are interested in good stories. Anyway, nobody need be the least afraid of finding these stories too serious, because they have helped their writers on the road towards a degree from Harvard University. Nobody is in danger of suffering undue mental strain in reading them. Like most good stories, they are intended primarily to entertain. They did entertain the instructor as he read them, and so he is glad to take this opportunity to thank the authors heartily for the pleasure which they—like so many others of his students—have given him. No doubt the fortunate public will now show their good taste by equal appreciation.

HOWARD MAYNADIER



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# THE LADY IN GRAY





## THE LADY IN GRAY

“URIEL, my child, here's a letter from your dear mother," said Miss Lavender to her niece. "She says that she is expecting you next Thursday on the one o'clock train. Unless Hortense is better by that time, I don't see who will be able to take you down."

"I guess I'm old enough to take care of myself," replied Muriel proudly, for she was secretly quite pleased at the idea of travelling alone.

Muriel Littleton was an only daughter and had just finished a course at Miss Debbs's School for Young Ladies. Her father and mother had gone to their summer house at Narragansett Pier a few weeks before, leaving her to the care of her maiden aunt, Miss Priscilla Lavender, until school should be over. Miss Lavender had been in a tremendous state of excitement ever since Muriel's arrival. She declared that she had not done so much worry-



ing since the illness of her prize Angora cat, Timothy B. Now, to cap it all, Hortense, her niece's maid, had come down with pleurisy, and so the entire charge of the young lady fell on her aunt's nervous shoulders. The thought of getting Muriel off her hands was a relief to the poor woman, but the idea of the girl's going unchaperoned from New York to Narragansett Pier tempered this relief with considerable dismay. With this cloud hanging over her head, Miss Lavender set about helping her niece get her things ready for the summer. Between them they managed to pack the three trunks and two hat-boxes which made up the necessary equipment for a quiet season at the Pier. After this feat the good lady was exhausted. Muriel, however, was full of pleasant anticipation.

On the day of departure Miss Lavender took occasion at luncheon to deliver herself of a few words of advice.

"Now, Muriel, before you go, I want you to promise me two or three things." (Muriel steeled herself for an avalanche of exhortations.) "First, I want you to remember that you are only seventeen, and, after all, a *very* young girl. I want you to promise me faith-

fully that you won't buy any of those vulgar novels that they sell on trains. They are full of sentimental trash and are not the things for you to read, my dear. You had much better read that nice edition of 'Romola' that your Aunt Helen gave you last Christmas. Also, if any young man should be impertinent enough to address you, I want you to refuse to answer and to gaze upon him with cold disdain." Miss Lavender had one of the hated novels to thank for this last phrase. "He will see that he is speaking to a lady and will know enough to discontinue his odious attentions. Now about your money. Be very careful of it, and always be sure to keep your hand on your purse. And don't waste any money on candy. That always is extravagant and is ruinous to the complexion. I will send Katy with you as far as the station. Now, dear, kiss me good-bye, and promise to take good care of yourself;" and Miss Lavender offered a faded cheek for her niece's delectation.

"Good-bye, Aunt Pris," said Muriel, giving her a hasty kiss, and the next minute she was rattling off to the station in a taxi, with her aunt's words of advice still ringing in her

ears and the faithful Katy seated by her side. She had just time to get her ticket, say good-bye to Katy, buy a magazine, and catch the train. After vainly trying to guess the title of a picture in which a clergyman and a scantily clad young lady took up the foreground, she looked about her in search of interest. A blue-coated boy was swinging down the aisle.

“New novel by Peter McFarland, just out,” he bawled. “Fascinating tale of real life!”

Muriel hesitated a minute, as she thought of what her Aunt Priscilla had said, and then beckoned to the boy.

“How much is that new novel, please?” she asked blushing.

“Dollar-twenty, Miss.”

Soon Muriel, oblivious of everything about her, was buried in the adventures of the “Lady in Gray.” She followed her through theatres, cafés, dances, palaces, yes, and through trains, with eager interest. The “Lady in Gray” certainly was charming. Finally to Muriel’s delight this beautiful girl became safely married to the attractive young prince whom she had met travelling “incog.” on the Bar Harbor Express. It was all too good to be

true! How romantic the meeting had been! The "Lady in Gray" had dropped her handkerchief quite by accident. The good-looking young man across the aisle had hastened to pick it up with the brilliant remark of, "It's very warm, is it not?" She had replied, "Yes, extremely." And so the affair began.

Muriel settled back in her chair as she pondered on the happiness of the young couple and thought of the "luminous glory of love." That was a phrase she had found in the book, and she liked it very much. Suddenly she caught sight of a handsome young man opposite her. She had not noticed him before, so engrossed had she been in her novel. He was dressed in a plain blue serge suit and a straw hat, and was gazing at her with a sort of twinkle in his dark gray eyes. Suddenly her handkerchief fluttered to the floor. Afterwards she asked herself if she really meant to let it drop or not. The young man sprang to pick it up, saying with a glance at the book in her lap,

*"It's very warm, is it not?"*

Before Muriel knew what she was doing, she had replied, "Yes, extremely," and was blushing furiously.

"Won't you let me have the porter open your window?" the young man was saying.

"Oh, thank you," she murmured, "you are very kind."

While the porter was fussing with her window, she tried to decide whether she ought to keep on talking to her new acquaintance. Why not? He looked like a gentlemen and was so nice! How romantic it would be! She could leave him at the Pier anyway.

"What is your destination?" she asked in her sweetest tones.

"Why, I'm going to Narragansett Pier," he replied.

"So am I!" Muriel exclaimed. "Isn't it a lovely place! This is only the second season that we've been there. We always used to go to Long Island, but last year Papa took a house at Narragansett Pier, and we all had a glorious summer. I suppose you've been there thousands of times?"

"Yes, I have been there a good deal," said the young man. "I love the place, but there is getting to be such an army of rich Jews down there that I'm afraid they'll spoil it some day. Their hideous castles are beginning to ruin the landscape already. It's too

bad that America's vulgar rich can't be segregated."

Muriel started. This was exactly the sentiment, almost the identical words, which the Prince had vouchsafed to the "Lady in Gray" on their first romantic meeting in the Bar Harbor Express. How like the Prince this young fellow was with his quiet voice and aristocratic notions! How she wished that she knew his name! The "Lady in Gray" had had no trouble in finding out the Prince's, for that gentleman had introduced himself very shortly after he had restored her handkerchief to her.

"Yes, they have taken quite a hold on the place. It's too bad," she said with sympathetic indignation, suddenly realising that some answer was expected to his heated denunciation of the prosperous race with the crooked noses. She simply had to find out who he was! Suddenly a thought occurred to her. It was worth trying at any rate. She peered fixedly out of the window and exclaimed enthusiastically—

"Oh, look at those beautiful trees, Mr. ——"

"Fulton," he supplied rather whimsically. Then, pausing a moment, "Aren't they picturesque, Miss ——"

“Montague,” she gasped, and then bit her lip with annoyance because she had not had the courage to give her real name. However, Montague was more romantic than Littleton at any rate.

They sat in silence after this mutual introduction. Mr. Fulton crossed his legs and began looking out of the window at more trees like those which Muriel had admired so much, while she racked her brain for something else to say. She must not allow the conversation to flag in this manner. The “Lady in Gray” would not have done so, she felt sure.

“I suppose that you are a hard-working business man coming down for the week-end, Mr. Fulton,” she said, congratulating herself that this was rather good.

The young man turned about and eyed her seriously.

“Well, hardly,” he answered sadly. “You see—I suppose I ought to have told you before—I’m a chauffeur,” and he looked away to avoid meeting her eyes.

“What!” cried Muriel, drawing back; “but you look and talk like a gentleman! How could you have deceived me so!” and her pretty eyes filled with tears.



"It was low of me, I admit," he replied penitently, "but I don't often get a chance to talk to girls of your sort, and the temptation was too great. I'm very sorry."

"Well, I would rather that you would not speak to me any more," she said haughtily, but secretly she was rather pleased at the humble sincerity of his apology.

"I was a gentleman once," he went on, not heeding her. "But sometimes men fall in the world. I won't trouble you any more," and he started to rise.

"Oh, stay and tell me about yourself," she cried impulsively. How sorry she felt for him! "You must have had a hard time."

"Well, yes," he said, sitting down again, "but I guess that I deserved it. It's the old, old story. I went to college with a good, fair allowance, but what with cards and drink I soon ran through it and piled up debts that make me shudder every time I think of them. I could no longer hope for help from my family, who were heartbroken at my excesses, so I was turned out upon the world to shift for myself. That was a year ago. It went pretty hard with me for a while, but the other day I met a man who used to

work for my father. He said that he could get me a job as chauffeur down here at Naragansett Pier. I used to run a car myself in the old days. I jumped at the chance, for it meant food at any rate. The man lent me enough to get some decent clothes, and to-day I start work. I'm going to keep on working until I'm able to pay every cent I owe and look my father in the face once more!" And the young man glowed with noble determination that did him credit.

"That's splendid!" cried Muriel, clasping her hands enthusiastically. "I'm sure that you'll make good!"

Here was a hero indeed! To be sure, he was no prince, only a poor, hard-working chauffeur, but, as Muriel told herself, his determination to retrieve his fortunes raised him above the horde of ordinary chauffeurs and gave him an almost ethereal distinction. Besides, he had been a gentleman once. He was still, as far as she was concerned.

The train pulled into the Pier station and Muriel caught sight of her mother and her brother standing on the platform. She rose hastily.

"I must say good-bye now," she said.

"You know that it would not do for my family to see me talking to you. Perhaps, when you've made good—"

"Good-bye," said the young man chokingly. "God bless you for your kindness!" And they parted, leaving by separate doors.

After Muriel had finished kissing her mother, she said, "Where's Jim? I thought I saw him standing with you."

"Oh, he's gone to meet a friend and will be here in a minute," said Mrs. Littleton.

The next moment they saw Jim coming towards them arm in arm with a young man. Muriel's head swam and the platform seemed to be slowly rising and sinking! It was her acquaintance of the train!

"This is my sister, Harry," Jim was saying. "If you'll excuse me, Mother, I've got some errands to do in the village. Harry can run you up in the car and then come back for me. You're a good chauffeur, aren't you, Harry?"

The first thing Muriel knew she was whirling away with her mother and the "chauffeur." As they sped over the even slope of Bellevue Avenue, Mrs. Littleton could not help wondering at the silence of Jim's friend. And Muriel

too! The girl had nothing to say for herself at all! What could be the matter? Mrs. Littleton was puzzled.

"You must help us amuse Muriel, Mr. Fulton. We have very few men down here just now," she said brightly.

"Pleasure," muttered Fulton, red to the ears with embarrassment. What could he possibly say to Miss Littleton? What a fool he had been! But as he thought of the brilliant cover of "The Lady in Gray" he could not help smiling in spite of himself. It was almost worth the punishment, but not quite. He was certainly in a very awkward position.

"What have you been reading lately, my dear?" Mrs. Littleton was saying to Muriel.

"Oh, nothing," said Muriel, blushing painfully. Would this dreadful drive ever be over? How could he have made such fun of her? She was ready to cry with vexation. The humiliation of it all!

"There's the driveway," she heard her mother say as from a long distance.

"Thank heaven it's almost over!" thought Muriel and Fulton simultaneously.

The big machine drew up in front of a

spacious white stone "cottage" with a pleasant outlook over the blue waters of the Bay.

"Dinner will be ready in about an hour," said Mrs. Littleton. "Do try and make Jim hurry up. He's always late to meals."

The thought of an hour's freedom from embarrassment was sweet to Fulton as he sped down the long drive.

When Mrs. Littleton was alone with her daughter, she inquired rather anxiously,

"Why were you so subdued on the way up from the station, Muriel? You hardly said a word? Can anything have happened? Is your Aunt Priscilla quite well?"

"Yes, Mamma," said Muriel confusedly. "Everything is all right. Aunt Pris is very well and sends you her love."

But Mrs. Littleton knew that everything was not "all right." Muriel was usually so bright with strangers. What was the proper explanation? Suddenly her eye caught sight of "The Lady in Gray" lying on the table.

"Where did that book come from?" she demanded.

"Oh, it's one that I bought on the train," said Muriel, trying to look unconcerned.

“ Is it interesting? ” her mother persisted.

“ No. That is, yes. Quite so.” And Muriel blushed deeply in spite of herself.

Mrs. Littleton went away to dress more puzzled than ever.

That evening at dinner Muriel sat next to Harry Fulton. There was to be a *bal masqué* at the Casino and there was much discussion about costumes. This happily furnished Muriel and Fulton with a topic of conversation. They discussed quite gaily the relative value of Dutch girls, pierrettes, sailors, and clowns. The embarrassment which they had felt on the drive up from the station was beginning to wear away.

“ I think sailors ought to be barred from fancy parties,” Muriel said. “ They are altogether too common. Besides, if the men know that they can always go as sailors, it makes them lazy and they don’t take any trouble about their costumes, while the poor girls have to lie awake all night thinking about theirs.”

“ That’s true,” said Fulton, “ but then, the girls ought to have to take more trouble about their costume than the men. It’s only right. A woman’s appearance is a very important

thing. I regard a sailor suit as a God-send where fancy parties are concerned."

"What are you two talking about so busily?" said Mrs. Littleton, thinking to herself how pretty Muriel was looking.

"The proverbial question of what a woman ought to wear," Fulton replied, smilingly.

"By the way, Mr. Fulton," Mrs. Littleton went on, "have you read 'The Lady in Gray'?" My daughter tells me it is very interesting."

"No," Fulton lied promptly, and lapsed into silence. Mrs. Littleton renewed her efforts to engage him in conversation, but without success. He seemed to have lost his power of speech.

"What a peculiar young man," she said to herself.

Finally to the relief of two of those present the conversation became general and the rest of the dinner-party passed off smoothly enough. After dinner Jim proposed bridge, but was voted down, and the girls retired to dress for the party.

"Let's get dressed now and walk over to the Casino, Jim," said Fulton, wishing to avoid, at least for the present, another forced conversation with Muriel.



"All right," Jim assented. "I haven't walked anywhere for a month."

When Muriel arrived at the Casino, the dance was in full swing, with Conrad playing and the large ball-room crowded with variegated figures. Pierrots, pierrettes, Spanish girls, sailors, eighteenth-century beauties, and eighteenth-century beaux added to the picturesqueness of the scene. As Muriel was a good dancer, she was soon gliding about the room doing her best to recognise friends and acquaintances among the vast throng. It was delightful to her, when boys whom she had known all her life, failed to recognise her through her dainty lace mask. She laughed at them and refused to speak in spite of the most touching entreaties. She could not help feeling that her costume was a success, that the music was enchanting, and that she was having a very good time.

"May I cut in?" a voice was saying at her elbow, a strangely familiar voice somehow, and she found herself dancing with a tramp in a shabby black coat and dilapidated felt hat.

"Now who in the world are you?" Muriel asked wonderingly.

"Well, men call me Prince, but sometimes even royalty likes to get away from all responsibility and travel in disguise. 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown,' you know."

"But your voice is familiar," Muriel went on. "I cannot help feeling that I must have met you somewhere."

"Very possible. Did you ever go to Bar Harbor, Miss Littleton?"

"Yes," said Muriel, "but I can't seem to remember you there. Won't you please tell me your name? It's mean to keep me in suspense."

The Prince paused a moment, and then whispered in Muriel's ear,

"Will you promise not to tell anyone if I reveal myself?"

"Yes, oh, yes!" Muriel exclaimed excitedly.

"Well, then," he spoke so low as to be almost inaudible, "not really royalty; only —Mezzalini."

Muriel started. Mezzalini was the name of the prince in "The Lady in Gray!"

"Oh, how could you deceive me again, Mr. Fulton!" she cried. "Oh, how unendurable! I can't understand how you could trifle with my feelings." She had never used

that phrase herself before, but heroines in her novels used it. She started to leave him.

He became serious at once. "One minute, please, Miss Littleton. I have something very important to say to you. We must have an understanding. I just got off that stuff about Mezzalini because I did not know exactly how to begin. Would you mind stepping out on the porch? I really must talk to you."

Muriel wanted to refuse, but the tone of his voice commanded obedience.

"Very well," she said as indifferently as she could.

When they were seated on the porch, he began,

"I don't know whether you will ever forgive me after my actions on the train. I behaved abominably, don't you think so?"

"Yes, perhaps you did," said Muriel, feeling uncomfortable.

"Well," he went on, taking off his mask, "when I saw you reading that book and when you dropped your handkerchief, I could not resist handing it back to you with the same words which the Prince used to the Lady in Gray. You see, I had just finished reading the book myself and thought that you would

catch on. It was pure mischief on my part, I admit, but the chance was too good. I'm awfully sorry. Then, when you seemed willing to talk to me, there was another temptation stronger than the first. You told me your name was Montague, so I thought there was no harm in telling you the chauffeur story. You didn't look as if your name was Montague, and I didn't think that I looked like a chauffeur. I suppose I relied altogether too much on my respectable appearance. I never thought for a moment that you would take me seriously. Anyway, I had no idea that Jim's sister would be travelling on that train. It was just like him not to tell me anything about it. Miss Littleton, have you a sense of humor? "

" I think so," said Muriel cautiously, but feeling sure of it as she looked at his serious face under the shabby felt hat.

" Well, doesn't it seem absurd to you that we should have made such fools of ourselves over such an insignificant book as 'The Lady in Gray'? You took it too seriously and I not seriously enough, don't you think so? " And he smiled engagingly.

Just why Muriel said " yes " to this question she did not know. The way in which

he said "don't you think so?" may have had something to do with it. Besides, they were gazing into each other's eyes, and her hand lay close to his. Faint strains of Conrad sounded from the ball-room and the conversation of the dancers was borne to them gently, but it all seemed very far away.

"I guess you are the Prince after all—Harry," said Muriel softly; and once more she thought of the "luminous glory of love." Her hand crept even closer to his. And then—well, of course, there was only one thing that he could do.

After Fulton went to his room that night, he sat up long and late, deep in thought. That he had gone too far was undeniable. What was he to do? Muriel was an exceedingly pretty girl, it was true, but she meant nothing to him beyond being Jim's sister. Why would she give such a romantic twist to everything he said or did? "Curse 'The Lady in Gray,' anyhow!" he exclaimed. Why did young girls read such books? Suddenly he heard a knock and the sound of hastily retreating footsteps. He went to the door and found a note addressed to himself lying on the threshold. Opening it, he read:

“Dear Prince,

“How can I tell you? It’s all so wonderful to me! You see Jack Willoughby, who came back from the dance with us, has loved me dreadfully ever since last winter, and after you went up-stairs, he said there was something he must tell me, and he asked me to marry him. I told him I should have to think it over, but I thought it only fair to you to let you know *at once* that I may say ‘yes.’ I hope you won’t be *too* much cut up if I do, and that nothing I may have said to-night has given you undue encouragement. I should *never* forgive myself if I thought that I had blighted your life.

“M. L.”

“Lucky Jack!” Fulton almost shouted, “I know one man that you needn’t be afraid of.”

HAROLD AMORY.





# THE DICE DECIDE





## THE DICE DECIDE

**F**ROM early childhood Levy had always shown great fondness for anything shaped like a cube. Whether his ancestors were in any way connected with the great Euclid is not known, although with a little expense and a clever genealogist such might easily be proved the case. The fact is, even before he was able to talk he would sit in the middle of the floor and play with a couple of lumps of sugar without a sound, except an occasional inarticulate chuckle of delight. When, after a short time, he knocked the corners off the lumps he seemed to realise that they were no longer perfect cubes, for then he would eat them and cry for more. When this "sugar age" had passed, and he became old enough to guide himself safely from chair to chair, he made it known in lusty tones that his happiness was incomplete without building-blocks. After his brother, Sam, brought a

set home to him one evening he remained satisfied for almost three months. Then an important event came in his life.

It happened that a young man who was calling on his oldest sister, accidentally pulled out a pair of dice along with his pocket-handkerchief. The youngster's shining black eyes caught sight of them, and, although he was unfamiliar with their purpose, he set up a cry which lasted until a severe spanking compelled him to suppress all outward manifestations of grief. Still, this longing had to be satisfied or the world would cease to move for the boy. As soon as Levy became old enough to run errands for his father, he learned, to his joy, that dice could be bought for two cents a pair at Goldstein's candy store; and that is where his first two coppers went.

About fifteen years after this event, Levy was one of a group of five who were engaged in a "crap" game on the corner of Cherry and Pike Streets. His love for dice, one may readily see, had not been of a transient nature. It was Friday afternoon, and the smell of fish pervaded the East Side. Underneath the terminal of the Manhattan Bridge, there was a pushing, sweating, chattering mob which

swarmed about the fish market, all with the one desire, to get fish and get them cheap. Men, women, and children moved to and fro in little jerky impulses; everybody had a bag or a basket which he clung to desperately.

Diagonally across from the terminal, on the corner, the little group of five were bending eagerly over a small pile of coins lying in the centre of the ring which they formed. One of the five was rolling the dice with a long swinging motion of his arm, snapping his fingers as he watched the ivory cubes turn over and over. Now he would blow his breath on them for luck, and now curse as the desired numbers failed to turn up—"praying," the others would call it.

Finally he rolled a seven, and Levy picked up the dice to try his luck. He blew his breath on them once or twice and shook them in the hollow of his hand. And then—

"Cheese it!" yelled a ragged urchin from across the street.

For the fraction of a second there was a wild scramble, and then the gang scattered in all directions. Two policemen who had caused the stampede were running from the terminal. They paused but a moment to see that no

money had been left, and then continued down Pike Street in hopes of catching one or more of the offenders.

Levy had knocked over a baby-carriage in getting started, and so was nearest to the police when the chase began. As he dodged in and out among push-carts and children, he spied an open hallway and darted into it. Turning to see that he was still pursued, he bounded up the steep, dark staircase three steps at a time. As he turned at the first landing he heard the two policemen in the hall below. So he continued to go up as though it were heaven itself he was trying to reach. When he came to the top floor a door opened and a young girl stepped out to see who was making all the noise.

“ My goodness, what’s the matter? ” she cried. “ Is the house—? ”

“ Cops! ” said Levy hoarsely, as he darted through the open door.

The police are looked upon with disfavor by all the people of the East Side. So the girl stepped quickly into the room, closed the door softly, and locked it. A moment later, as she listened with her ear to a panel, she heard the two policemen puffing outside.

"Hell!" said one, "got away by the roof. See! there's the open skylight."

"An' we climbed six flights of stairs in this dam' place. It'll take all the beer Kelly's got to make up for it."

The girl listened until she heard them go down, cursing Levy, his whole race, and the man who invented tenements. Then she went into the parlor just off the little entry, where she found Levy nervously rattling the dice in his pocket.

"Well," she said, scrutinising him, "what have you been doing?"

Now Levy was not used to talking with strange young ladies; his bump of bashfulness, if such a thing exists, prevented fluent speech. Besides, this girl was prettier than any of his sisters and had a way of raising her dark eyebrows which made him shift uneasily from one foot to the other. So, realising that the odds were against him, he simply answered, "Nothin'."

"What did the cops want of you then?"

Levy continued to play nervously with his dice.

"Why don't you talk, man? I ain't goin' to eat you," and the girl raised her eyebrows higher than ever.



Just then there was a knock at the door.

Levy breathed a sigh of relief as the girl turned to answer the knock, and then quaked inwardly as he thought that it might be the police again.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"It's me, Rose," was the answer; "what did you lock the door for when I told you I'd be right back?"

Rose opened the door and allowed her sister, Ruth, to enter. The girl started through the parlor, but the sight of Levy looking like a cat that had just licked the cream off the morning's milk, caused her to drop several of her packages and look suspiciously at her sister. The latter burst into a ringing laugh as she glanced at the unhappy Levy. Then she explained as much as she knew and turned to the uninvited guest for the rest. Levy managed to utter a few broken phrases about a crap game and then started for the door, which Ruth had not quite closed. As he went down the stairs he heard the laughter of the two girls whom he had left so unceremoniously. It was not exactly pleasant to be laughed at, but anything was better than the situation from which he had just escaped. Levy was not conspicuous for social ease.

Down on the street again, he met his friend, Strauss, who had also successfully evaded the police.

"Where'd you hide on the cops?" asked Strauss, as the two walked together in the direction of Levy's home.

"Over Giliano's."

"In Cohen's?"

"No, on the top floor. Two goils live there an' they let me in."

"Oh! I know—old man Greenbaum's daughters. They're pretty good-lookin'," and Strauss's eyes shone with admiration. "I took one down to the Island once, an' had a swell time. Did you talk to them long?"

"No, not very," answered Levy after a moment's silence.

"Hell!" said his friend, "wish I'd been there; we'd be talkin' yet."

By this time the two had reached Levy's home where they parted. As Levy entered the room back of his father's tailor-shop, he found part of the family eating supper. The table was crowded, but he made two of his little brothers sit on one chair. His mother dished out some fish chowder and cut some bread for him.

"Been shootin' craps to-day?" asked his father before Levy had taken the first mouthful.

"Yes."

"Did you win?"

"No," said Levy with evident disgust.

"Oy! it is a bad business. Sometimes you win, but most of the times you lose. You will some day be sorry if you don't stop," and the old man stroked his long beard prophetically.

But Levy had heard this too often. When he finished eating, he took his hat and left. This time he wandered down the street in the direction of the Bowery.

The East Side had stopped active work for the day. The bustle and confusion of the afternoon had ceased; even the noise of the children had abated; but the people were just as numerous as ever. Old men with long black beards were seated on chairs out on the sidewalk smoking their pipes and discussing the events of the day. Women—thin and careworn—were gathered in groups on the doorsteps, and up and down the street was passing a continual stream of people.

Levy was attracted by a crowd in front of Whalen's saloon. A Socialist speaker was

standing in the back of a two-wheeled cart talking in a loud, convincing tone.

“It is the fault, the glaring fault, of the present generation,” he was saying, “that people do not marry early enough. This is especially the case with the upper classes. And what is the result? It is race suicide! This is not entirely true of you good people here, for statistics show that the Jew and the Italian marry younger than most people in America. But in the countries of Southern Europe the men marry at sixteen and the women at fourteen. The result is that they mature earlier and so become better citizens. An early marriage shows sympathy for mankind, and this is the first and fundamental principle of Socialism. Mr. J. G. Burke, who will represent the Socialist party in your interests at the next election, was himself married at the age of sixteen, thus showing his belief even before he thought of politics.”

The speaker talked for a while longer; and then, after calling for three cheers for Mr. Burke, the meeting broke up.

Levy had been greatly impressed by what he had heard, for he walked along the Bowery in such deep thought that he passed a crap game

without noticing it. Brought up in the very breeding-place of socialistic doctrine he was at heart a Socialist, although he had never realised it before. Marriage must be a pretty good thing after all, he thought, for most people marry once, and some several times. It was also a part of the religion of his people, so the inevitable conclusion came: he must get married! But how? Where was he to find enough money?

His wanderings had again carried him in the direction of a crowd. This time it was in front of the Bowery "A. C.," a local boxing club. There was to be a big fight that night, and those who were lucky enough to have tickets were already going into the hall. Now if there was one thing which Levy liked besides a crap game it was a fight. That is, he liked to watch a fight, and if he could find someone who was not too big, he would fight too, for he was tough and wiry, although not very large. So he looked longingly at the door through which the club members were passing. His eye caught a familiar figure on one side of the door; it was Strauss. He walked over to see him and was surprised to find that Strauss had a ticket.

“Where’d you get the pasteboard?” asked Levy.

“I got it for bein’ a sparrin’ partner. See me black eye?” said Strauss, turning a swollen face up toward the white arc-light.

“Want to sell it?” asked Levy, as a happy thought struck him.

“Aw, I wouldn’t sell it fer less’n a half, an’ you ain’t got that much.”

“No, but I got a quarter, an’ I’ll shoot that against the ticket.”

Strauss’s sporting blood was roused, and he invited Levy to step into a hallway.

The outcome was that Levy, with his own dice, won the ticket. As he took it from Strauss he dropped the quarter and it did not ring as a genuine silver quarter should.

“Hey, that’s lead!” cried Strauss, “lemme bite it an’ see if it ain’t?”

Levy refused, and backed up his statement by saying that he had won the ticket on the level.

“You wait, you crook,” cried Strauss unable to suppress his anger. “I get a black eye an’ lose me supper to get the ticket an’ then you swindle me for it! I’ll get even, you crook!”

Levy left him and marched by the ticket office into the hall.

In the centre was the ring with its padded posts and canvas-covered floor, raised about four feet. The place was only half filled, but men were coming in fast. A thin cloud of gray tobacco smoke floated at the ceiling of the hall, and a confused mingling of coarse voices filled the warm air below.

Levy shuffled down the aisle and dropped into a seat near the ring. Then he carefully rolled a cigarette and borrowed a light from his neighbor. With his hands plunged deep into his pockets, and his cigarette hanging from one corner of his mouth, he soon became oblivious of the noise and confusion about him. He thought again of what the Socialist leader had said: "It is the fault, the glaring fault, of the present generation that people do not marry early enough." Levy had thought of matrimony several times, but not very seriously, to be sure. Now, however, the idea had struck him with great force. He thought of the two girls who had caused him such embarrassment and wondered which would make the better wife. This was rather pleasant, and he smiled to himself at the idea; but almost immediately the smile vanished. "Hell!" he growled, "I ain't got no money—not even fer more cigarettes."



Suddenly the confusion in the hall became less apparent, and then almost ceased altogether. Levy glanced up and saw the referee about to speak.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the man who was to meet the 'Black Cyclone' in the first preliminary has not shown up. If anybody in the house is willin' to take a chance, he gets the ten-dollar purse if he stays three rounds." The referee stopped and looked expectantly about the hall. There was a moment's silence while heads turned in all directions to see if anyone would accept. During this time Levy was thinking hard. Then he rose slowly and started for the ring, amid yells of encouragement from the audience. A few moments later he appeared attired in a soiled pair of green trunks. He had never been inside a ring before, but he had taken part in many a street fight. He would fight, and that is what the crowd wanted.

The bell rang, and everybody settled back in his chair. The negro danced lightly, landing at long range. He was a tall, muscular fellow, black as the proverbial ace of spades. As Levy covered up and backed away, a great desire to quit came over him, but the idea of the big



purse was strong enough to prevent such action—for the present, at least. The negro continued to force the fighting, and Levy continued to stall and cover.

“Gwan an’ fight!” yelled an Irish voice from the gallery.

“This ain’t no synagogue!” yelled another, as Levy dropped to one knee to avoid a right swing.

The first round ended, much to Levy’s joy. He had an eye which rivaled Strauss’s and was very much “all in.” He wanted really to quit now, and told his second so, but that worthy assured him he had to fight it out or he would be mobbed. With this comforting information he started the second round.

His only chance was to stall for time, and nobody knew that better than Levy, for there was no chance of landing a blow on the clever negro. So he continued to run away, and feint, and fall, much to the disgust of the crowd. They had paid to see a fight, not a foot-race, so they yelled for a quick finish.

The “Black Cyclone” decided to increase his popularity by ending the battle. Levy had just sidestepped a left swing and found himself in one corner. The negro started a right

uppercut. Levy ducked, but ran into the blow, which lifted him from his feet and deposited him in a heap.

“One—two—three—” counted the referee, looking at his watch.

He might have counted a hundred for all that Levy cared. He was not knocked out completely, but he knew he soon should be if he got up.

“Ten!” cried the referee, and the house cheered the negro and hissed the Jew.

Levy got up and staggered to his dressing-room alone. If he had won, there would have been plenty to help him. Before a broken mirror he cared for his swollen face with warm water. Then he dressed painfully, for his whole body ached. As he was about to go out of the side door he spied the negro who had beaten him, smoothing the crisp ten dollar bill he had received for his evening's work.

Whether it was the same fate which ruled over his sister's caller fifteen years before, is not certain; but the fact is, just as Levy reached the door he pulled out his handkerchief in order to wipe the blood from a cut over his left eye, and—out jumped one of his dice on the floor. The negro saw it and his eyes shone.

"Ef you got any money you want to lose, we'll have a li'le game, boy," he said.

"Sure I got money, but I won't play fer less'n a quarter a throw," and Levy placed his lead quarter carefully on the floor so as not to betray its baseness. The negro placed his money alongside of it and the game started.

Levy seemed to have a special control over his dice, for he won, and won, until the ten dollars belonged to him. Then the negro fished in his pockets and brought out some small change. Levy won that, too, and left him standing there with his large mouth open in genuine negro sorrow. As it was late, he went straight home and to bed to dream of the day's events distorted in the manner characteristic of dreams. And not least prominent among his dreams were the faces of Ruth and her sister, Rose, who had laughed so merrily at his discomfiture.

He woke up early the next morning still thinking of the two girls. With a boldness prompted by his sudden acquisition of wealth, he had resolved to ask one to marry him. But which? They were both fine-looking, he thought. Rose especially had a very pretty way of raising her eyebrows; but her sister

was more quiet, and, if he was not mistaken, she had not laughed at him so loudly as Rose. Another crisis had come into his small world, and for the life of him he could not decide one way or the other.

Still debating with himself he got up, and after a hasty breakfast started out on the street again. At the corner he found Strauss evidently waiting for him. Waldstein, the sporting editor of "Wahrheit", had obtained the facts of last night's fight and had made a good "feature" story of them. Strauss had a copy of the paper and showed it to Levy. One whole column was devoted to telling how Levy had lost the fight but had won the prize after all, by clever use of the dice. Strauss was the first to congratulate him.

"It was my ticket that got you in," he said by way of a reminder.

"Sure thing!" said Levy, "an' it was me that got me nose an' eye punched." Evidently he could not see Strauss's point of view.

"What are you goin' to do wit all that money?"

"I'm thinkin' of gettin' married," said Levy.

"Who?"

“ One of them goils that live over Giliano’s fruit store; but I’m keepin’ it secret.”

“ Which? ”

“ I dunno. I can’t decide, but it’s one of them all right.”

Then an idea struck him. He seemed to be ruled by happy thoughts. He produced his dice. They had acted well towards him all his life, and especially well of late. Why not let them decide the question?

“ Say, Strauss, if I roll a seven—no, that wouldn’t be right—if I roll a six before a five, it’s Rose I marry; if the five comes first, it’s Ruth.”

He shook the dice and rolled, while Strauss looked on in scornful silence. After several throws a six turned up, and Levy put the dice in his pocket. A great weight had been taken off his mind and he felt better.

“ Are you goin’ to pay me fer the ticket you swindled me out of last night? ” said Strauss after a long silence.

“ No, didn’t I tell you I won it fair and square?” replied Levy.

Again Strauss muttered his threat to “ get even ” and the two parted. Levy went into a candy store and bought two cents worth of

hard candy. Then he went home and waited till school was out. When his little brother came in he met him.

“Louie, I’ll give you this candy if you will do something for me,” he said.

The boy looked longingly at the candy and then suspiciously at his big brother. “What?” he asked.

“Just write a note for me. It’s just a joke. Listen:

‘Dear Rose:—I want to get married an’ I think you will make a good wife. I will be aroun’ to see you to-night. From one who loves you.  
Abe Levy.’ ”

Again the boy looked suspiciously at his brother, and again Levy assured him that it was only a joke, and that he would tell him all about it some time. So the boy wrote the note; and Levy took it and dropped it into Rose’s letter-box, after carefully seeing that he was not observed.

That afternoon he made a few purchases—a red necktie and scarfpin to match, tan shoes, and a straw hat. About supper-time one of his sisters came in to tell him that he was wanted outside by Giliano’s boy who helped tend the fruit-stand. Levy went out, and the

little Italian told him very seriously that the girl upstairs had sent him.

“She say you no’ come to-night. She no’ lika da prize-fight’ if he no’ win; you no good, you never coulda win. She say you no’ playa crap for *her*. If you do, you losa da game.”

This was said in jerky fashion, but Levy got its full import nevertheless. The solution flashed upon him immediately: “That dam’ loafer, Strauss, he told!”

“The dice won’t decide *his* fate!” said Levy, as he clenched his fists.

R. G. CARTER.



“GOOD-BYE, VERA”





## “GOOD-BYE, VERA ”



MISS VERA CARISSON and her widowed mother had been among the first to patronise the new hotel. Mrs. Carisson, who had been one of New York's sublime society leaders in her younger days, was loath to yield to old Father Time; and was, in consequence, “hot-footing ” it round the country all the time—at a ball here, at a tea there, and in the social gossip everywhere. Her daughter was a constant source of disappointment to her, for to Vera, the ball, the hotel, the gay whirl and swirl were nothing but so much tommy-rot. And the society men—Ugh! she loathed them; she called them the third sex, “the afternoon men.” She had spurned the best tango-dancer in the country, in consequence of which her mother nearly went to a sanitarium. She had insulted earls and dukes; she had tripped up a Pittsburgh millionaire because she did not like the way he danced; she was absolutely and entirely

incorrigible. But let it not be inferred that Vera was unfeeling or selfish. On the contrary she resigned herself to most of her mother's ambitions with the placidity of a martyr; she loved her mother above everyone else in the world and was never happier than when with her on some quiet ramble or motor-ride through the country.

Mr. Carisson had made so many millions that it was thought he had lost track of them himself. The greater part of the fortune he had left to his wife, to be Vera's after her mother's death. For the present, rumor had it, he had bequeathed to the girl a mere six or seven million, with the famous and priceless "Carisson necklace," made up of pearls and diamonds, studded with sapphires, and bound with gold and platinum. At the "Ocean Rock House," it was the nightly expectation that Miss Carisson would wear the gems at dinner, but they were never seen; it was not even known whether the necklace was at the hotel at all, though according to the gossips, Mrs. Carisson would wear them herself when the Count de Pazi arrived.

From the moment that Johnston had first laid eyes on Vera, he could not get out of his

mind the image of her beautiful face, with its crowning mass of golden hair, its blue eyes, red lips, and pink cheeks. It was always before him, a constant hindrance to the concentration of his mind on his work. Even now, with a thousand and one tasks to perform, his gaze stole through the palm-shadowed orchestra, through the large windows and doors, through the flowered glass piazzas, out to the drive and away on the empty road, winding off like a ribbon into the centre of the ugly, oncoming storm-cloud. Vera had gone out motoring, driving the car herself; and the young clerk had taken it upon himself to feel rather uneasy. Mrs. Carisson was in her room resting. Entertaining no anxiety for her daughter at any time, she resented other people's asking about her, and her rage would have been truly awful, if, upon this occasion, she had known that a hotel-clerk even thought of Vera, whether for her welfare or her personality. Such people as clerks were in the world to work, not to think, especially not to think of their betters; people must be taught to keep in their places.

It was a close, overcast July evening. The clouds, which had been growing thicker and blacker since noon, were spreading out and

gathering in density and gloom. Already large drops of rain had begun to fall and the vapor was heavy in the air. Flashes of lightning illuminated the growing darkness with more and more brilliancy; and the rushing wind sprang up before the storm. The rumbling peals of thunder gathered themselves into a mighty crash; it became inky dark, and in a few moments the downpour of rain was violent.

The hotel motor-boats, private sailing craft, fishing parties, and belated bathers, all made for the landings and bath-houses. A stream of sportsmen and sportswomen flowed into the big hall, stopping before the desk to discuss the weather. Golf, tennis, motoring, sailing, bathing, croquet, all the summer sports had their representatives there in bedraggled paraphernalia. The stay-at-homes were there too, talking the loudest, especially about what they would do if it were not for the storm.

The clerk attracted many sly female glances, and forced a few admiring male ones. He gazed back at the throng with a curiosity mixed with contempt; he disliked the whole lot of them. One young man, tall and spare, who seemed to be talking louder than the rest, who was decidedly flashy in appearance, and

who kept continually watching Johnston, provoked him openly. Approaching the desk the man asked whether Miss Carisson had returned yet. Johnston paid no attention, and the loud-mouthed gentleman, whose name was Defrau, repeated the question.

"Not to my knowledge," replied Johnston coldly.

The sharp ring of the telephone bell cut short any remark the questioner might venture for the edification of the on-lookers. Johnston angrily unhooked the receiver.

"Hello, hello!" He received the plaintive query for his number. "No, no number," he thundered. "You rang the bell here. All right, all right; I'll hold the line. Hello!"

"Yes, this is the Ocean Rock House."

"Yes, this is Mr. Johnston."

"Oh, good heavens! Miss Carisson! I'll send a machine right down. I'm very sorry you're in such a plight."

"No, Mrs. Carisson shall know nothing about it. Good-bye."

Johnston turned hurriedly to the assistant bookkeeper. "Mr. Carper, will you please look after the office a minute?" Not waiting for a reply, he seized his hat, escaped through



a side door, and did a "440" in record time out to the big garage. Breathless and soaked, he arrived before the startled chauffeurs as if hurled by a bolt from the latest crash of thunder. "Jack, Tom, Harry, anybody, quick; get me a car, anything." The group regarded him stolidly and no one moved. Johnston roared at them, and one automaton pointed to a hotel taxi. To ask for further aid, information, or service of any kind was out of the question, especially out-of-doors, on such a night. Johnston made for the car, jumped in, started the motor himself, and having got somebody to open the garage door by continued yelling and gesticulating, he drove the machine out on the road.

Vera Carisson had said shortly and concisely that her car had run out of gasoline, that she could get none, and so was stuck by a farm-house ten miles from the hotel on the Granville road. She had also said that she must get back by dinner-time. To say that Johnston was elated at the prospect of rescuing this certain person would be to rate his state of feeling much too low. Words could not express his mingled emotions, as he leaned forward and drove the machine at break-neck speed through the rivers

and pools of mud. Skidding and sliding, bouncing and jolting, the little landaulet tore through the storm; not a light was lighted, not a thing could the driver see before him; it was a mad race.

After fifteen minutes Johnston espied two dim lights wavering before him in the darkness. He was upon them in a moment, nearly smashing both machines in the skidding of his car. Having successfully come to a stop, however, he alighted and splashed through the puddles to the big runabout at the side of the road. The top was up and the machine, to all appearances, was deserted. Johnston's feelings sank, and his clothes seemed horribly wet and annoying. Suddenly his spirits rose, his clothes were merely wet, for a female voice called out, “Bring over the gasoline with you.”

The clerk was at a loss how to answer, for he had no more thought of gasoline than of aeroplanes. He paused; then lifting his hat to the darkness, he approached the machine.

Vera was a brave young woman ordinarily, but this was a dark night, a fearful storm, and a very unfamiliar-looking, shadowy man. Johnston felt rather than saw the terror he was inspiring, so he called out:

"Miss Carisson, this is Mr. Johnston, Cecil Johnston. I have come for you in a taxi." Then after a pause, in which nothing was heard but the rattle of the engine and the patter of the rain, "I quite forgot the gasoline;" then, "it is now about half past seven." Another silence, and Johnston was beginning to feel he was decidedly "in wrong," when the side curtains on the runabout were flung back and he saw Vera's slight form step gingerly into the road. He instinctively went forward and offered his arm, which was not rejected.

"I couldn't get those chauffeurs to do anything," he explained; "they looked at me as if they thought I was crazy."

"It was very good of you to come; it must have been an awful bother."

Johnston muttered something about no bother, and fervently wished he might be so bothered all his life. He opened the door of the landaulet, but Vera stepped past and climbed into the front seat. Johnston slammed the door and bounded joyfully up beside her at the wheel; he threw in the clutch and the car started forward. About a hundred yards ahead was a long curve, where the road widened considerably. Cecil intended to make for this

and turn round without backing. The machine had hardly gathered headway when a “ klaxon ” screech warned them of the approach of another car; but which direction the sound came from Johnston could not tell. In a minute, however, the brilliance of the searchlights and a timely flash of lightning discovered Henry Defrau’s big red touring-car bearing down on them from in front. The flash revealed the landaulet, and the touring-car came to a stop not any too soon. Vera uttered a faint scream and clutched Johnston’s sleeve. That gentleman was gazing ahead with a quizzical expression at Defrau himself who had climbed out and was approaching them. Johnston leaned out and squinted at the newcomer.

“ Mr. Defrau, there is nothing for you to pick here; will you please move your car out of the way?”

Defrau paused as if astounded; Johnston continued: “ We will wait I think,” he said distinctly, “ until another time.”

“ Is that Johnston, the clerk, *and Miss Carisson?* Why, my gracious, Miss Carisson, get right into my car.” Defrau laid a firm grip on Vera’s sleeve, but she withdrew her arm and declined his invitation. Defrau insisted

and grew rougher and ruder. Johnston apparently could stand it no longer.

"Get off that running board, Defrau, or I'll knock you off." His teeth were set, and Vera vaguely thought of him in those big college football games that she had overheard him describing to Mr. Dobbs, the manager of the hotel. "Did you hear what I said, Defrau?" Johnston looked steadily at the intruder with a studied calm.

"Oh, you go to Hell," said Defrau angrily.

Johnston rose and levelled a blow at the would-be hero's head. His fist seemed to the girl to miss its mark, for there was no sound of impact; but Defrau reeled back, staggered theatrically, and fell heavily. Johnston immediately got out, went to him, and found him apparently only a little dazed, for after some hasty words, Johnston helped him to his machine, which he drove off with seeming ease. The clerk returned to the landaulet, but hardly dared look at Miss Carisson, fearful of the worst.

"Thank you," she said simply, breaking the silence when he had turned the car round and they were speeding homewards; "thank you very much; that is the third time he has annoyed me since I have known him."

“ It is, is it!” thought Johnston to himself, but aloud he said he had done nothing, and should be glad of the chance to serve her in any way he could at any future time. For the remainder of the ride, they talked of the hotel picnic which was to take place the next day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Carisson reproached her daughter for staying out so late, and Mr. Dobbs politely requested Mr. Johnston not to take so long at his dinner hereafter. Defrau apparently chose to keep the affair to himself.

There is nothing like a secret to bring two people together. Vera was undeniably attracted to Johnston, and as the days passed and she saw more and more of him, the attraction, so admirably and deservedly inspired by his automobile rescue and behavior that first night, ripened into affection. She had delighted in the way he had punched Defrau, who, by the way, had been more obnoxious than ever since that time; she had admired his modesty and polite reserve, and had envied his abilities to do things—even the tango. She had come to look upon him as her protector against Defrau. It had not taken long for Mrs. Carisson’s discerning eye to note that something was



wrong. Like a hawk she followed her prey to the lair, and what a lair! Behind the hotel desk; the clerk! Her first impulse was to leave the place at once, but then she could not, for this would be recognising the attention of the clerk to her own daughter; and besides, the Count de Pazi was coming. No, she must have the clerk removed. She conceived a terrible hatred for Johnston and was always smiling, within earshot, when he suffered every evening the loud persecutions of Defrau; and Defrau seemed to delight in making himself objectionable, especially to Miss Carisson, who was rescued time and again by Johnston, whether on the beach, on the walk, in the motor-boat, or at the dance. Mrs. Carisson rather liked Defrau; he was reputed rich, was young and handsome, and was said to be a great favorite in Washington. She was never tired of hearing him nag Johnston; she laughed when he made fun of colleges; she smiled knowingly and with girlish ease when he hinted that some people nowadays did not seem to know their place in this world; "but perhaps they will," he always added with a wink, "in the next." In short, by the end of the month things had come to a pretty pass. Vera was openly in love with

her constant protector, the handsome hotel-clerk, yet pestered by rich and idle hotel guests; her mother was losing her self-control over the affair; and Mr. Dobbs was at a loss how to rid himself of Johnston, who was undeniably an attraction, and who went calmly on, oblivious of all the havoc he was raising, and of the persecutions of the distracted mother and Defrau.

It was one evening a fortnight or so after the automobile affair that Defrau brought the hostility to a climax. In his usual jaunty, debonair way he accosted his prey after dinner.

"Well, Mr. Johnston, where have you been to-day? Some jolly little boating-party no doubt; ha, ha! I think the bell-boys here do more work than you."

Johnston was busily engaged in making out a cash record for the past two weeks, and in placing bills away in neat piles in the drawers of the big safe. He paid no attention to the remarks. Defrau was about to venture further, when a dapper little gentleman in creamy flannels laid a warning hand upon his arm.

"Sir," said the man, "if I were you I would desist; there is a limit to human endurance, you know."



Defrau was dumfounded, he had never seen the fellow before in his life! "What the devil—?" he gasped.

The stranger smiled, exhibiting several large gold teeth. "Never mind Mr. Defrau." Then leaning over the desk, "Mr. Johnston, I am Nevius, Arthur Nevius. I'm general manager of the Old Colony Hotel Syndicate; now we're running four places, but we don't think they're going to pay; if you could give me some idea of your earnings up to date—let me inside your safe here for a minute or two, so to speak, I should be ever so much obliged."

He turned almost fiercely on Defrau, "I guess you know me now, eh—Nevius of the Green Beach House?" His eyes were glittering, his mouth, under his pudgy cheeks, was drawn up with a sneer.

The effect upon Defrau was evidently contrary to his expectations, for that astonished gentlemen looked at him coldly a moment, then quickly turned on his heel and walked away.

"Well I'll be damned," said the little man; then in a voice loud enough for the by-standers to hear: "I could tell you more about that man than he wants known, when he and I—" but he evidently thought better of it and closed his

mouth with a defiant snap. “ I may be wrong, though,” he muttered and gazed about rather sharply.

Mr. Nevius was not an attractive person. He was extremely short. What little hair he had was a faded yellow and brushed straight back; his eyes were of a misty baby blue, pig-like and continually shifting uneasily and furtively. He wore a white flannel suit, a straw hat thrust casually on the back of his head, and a pair of immaculate white shoes.

He aroused in Johnston the feeling he aroused in most people—repugnance. “ I’m sorry, Mr. Nevius,” he said in his most suave, yet apologetic voice, “ but Mr. Dobbs, the manager, is in New York just at present, and I hardly like to take upon myself the responsibility of communicating the hotel’s private affairs in his absence, and without his permission.”

“ Certainly, certainly; you’re quite right; I understand perfectly. When will Mr. Dobbs be back? ” Nevius spoke in the quiet, almost subdued voice, that suggests at least a little refinement.

“ He’ll be back the day after to-morrow in the morning.”

“ Ah, does he go away often? ”

"No, this is the first time he has been away. He usually is here at the desk in the evening to lock up for the night."

"Thank you; I'll wait over for him then, I guess." He bowed and moved off toward the crowded ball-room.

Vera, usually with Johnston at the dance in the evening, now walked up to the desk. She had escaped from the ball-room and her mother, and had been idly standing by during the conversation with Nevius.

The young clerk thought he had never seen her, or anyone, more beautiful than she was that night; and he told her so. She blushed prettily, and the cause of it had a hard time to keep himself from flinging away his bank notes, leaping over the desk, and taking her in his arms. He had a mad passion to place just one long, sublime kiss upon her lips, to fold her to his bosom, to drink now of that vast and mighty tonic of love with which he hoped, perhaps, some day to intoxicate himself.

She came nearer and leaned her elbows on the desk; he could feel her soft breath; he trembled, he grew dizzy; she leaned nearer; he lost all self-command.

"Vera," he gasped, "Vera; my God, I love

you!" She was misty before his eyes, he seemed to be standing on space. Their lips met.

The girl recoiled. "No, no, Cecil, not here." She looked fearfully around and breathed a sigh of relief at the empty hall. She started to go, but he grasped her hand. She bent toward him. "I love you, Cecil," she whispered with lowered eyes, "I have loved you ever since—since that night in the storm."

"I'm glad that happened," he said smiling; "I should never have got to know you but for that."

"I'm glad, too;" she said simply. Then after a pause, "When did you say you had to go back to college, Cecil?"

"Why worry about that, dearest?" He ventured the appellation with some misgiving, but received not so much even as a reproachful look.

"Because Mother and I leave the first of August, and I think we're coming back in September." A pause. "Count de Pazi has postponed his visit until then, you know," she added with a sad little smile.

"I leave about the fifteenth," he said, his voice getting husky in spite of himself. "My

college is a small Western college and I have a long way to go."

A wistful look came into her eyes. "We shall see each other often before I go?"

"We shall," he acquiesced, and pressed her hand. "Often, very often, I hope."

They were standing thus, lost in their happiness, hand in hand, when Mrs. Carisson burst upon them, a veritable cyclone of wrath. Where she had come from neither of them knew; the chances are that she was behind one of the large marble pillars close at hand. She was so angry that she literally choked with wrath; she could not find a single word with which to express herself; she just stood and glared.

Johnston carefully removed all projectiles out of her reach, such as ink bottles and pens; if she had had a gun, nobody's life would have been worth the dust in the road. Yet Mrs. Carisson really did remarkably well for her, for when she found words, she merely said: "*Vera Carisson, come at once.*" Her actions belied her frigid calm, for she seized the girl's arm and dragged her away so roughly that Johnston nearly knocked her down. To make matters worse, Vera's last glimpse of the office

showed her Defrau's cynical, diabolically leering face. He was leaning with his usual aggressive attitude towards Johnston, and seemed to be contemplating his evening sport with great expectation of enjoyment.

A wide-eyed, open-mouthed group of bell-boys, maids, and valets were clustered round the key-hole of Room No. 67. One by one they had taken up their positions since Mrs. Carisson and her daughter had entered, and they stayed until nearly midnight, relays acting as informing parties. They were entertained in a very unusual and sensational manner, no less than by a young lady's insisting that she loved a young man, and keeping on insisting it, in spite of an irascible and domineering mother's decided and loud opposition. Such bits as: “Horrible—Ridiculous—Socially Nothing;” and “Socially Ruined—Ghastly—Consequences—Fool,” and many other uncomplimentary things floated out even as far as the head of the grand stairway. The result of the matter was that the mother gained nothing but the knowledge that her only daughter, her one hopeful, was madly in love, and determined to have her own way for once.

The girl at last flung herself out of the room

where her mother stood flushed and hot, breathless from long harangues and vain arguments. Mrs. Carisson remained motionless while her daughter, sobbing, moved about in the next room. Presently Vera reappeared, framed in the doorway, a picture of beautiful defiance; and on her slender neck glistened the gems of the priceless necklace.

Mr. Carisson had stated in his will, among other conditions, that Vera should not be allowed to wear the famous necklace until she was engaged. That Vera should put it on now was the final renunciation of maternal influence; it was the last and conclusive blow at the mother's pride. She must either accept or disown her daughter.

"Vera, Vera," she exclaimed in an agony of conflicting emotions, "Vera, what has got into you? Why are you acting in this way?"

"Because I love him, Mother." The girl threw back her head. "I love him and intend to marry him." There followed a long silence, both women breathing hard. The climax had come and passed; the daughter turned abruptly and went back to her bed-room, not trusting herself to speak. It had been a battle royal, the crucial struggle for the power of ruling;



if the younger had lost she would have been a life-long captive; she had won and so declared her independence forever.

Still she was trembling violently. A feeling of having wronged herself and her mother crept over her, a feeling of despair crying for relief and comfort. There was only one person who could satisfy this, and so blindly she threw open the door of her room and stepped into the hall. Just what she intended to do she did not know herself; vaguely she wanted Johnston, wanted to tell him, to be calmed by his masterful voice. She gained her wish so quickly that it startled her, not to say him, for he was at that precise moment on his way to bed. She appeared so suddenly, so radiant in her natural, even if tearful beauty, and in the glittering enhancement of the gems at her throat, that the young man was obliged to put his hand on the wall to steady himself.

“Vera,” he gasped, “What on earth—?”

She stood for a second irresolute, then turned and fled; like a glistening, jewelled fairy she had come and gone before him. *He* had seen the necklace—though in ignorance, of course, of its purport; *he* had been the first man ever to see her wear it, and in consequence she was,

by the will of a dead father, to be *his* wife; the Fates had ordained it. With a feeling of uncontrolled happiness she tossed off her jewels and clothes, and flung herself into bed.

Vera lay a long time with no inclination for sleep. She tossed and turned, she fretted and cried; she was losing a mother to gain a husband, whose face was ever before her—young, handsome, strong, and kindly. She went over in her mind all his actions, all the times she had been with him, had seen him, had——. Her mind became a muddle of recollections, her thoughts strayed far; she drifted off into sweet slumber.

She was on a far-away island and *he* was by her side; they were standing hand in hand gazing at a mountain. Suddenly the mountain exploded; there was a tremendous crash, and from everywhere funny little people all in white came running and screaming toward her.

“Vera, Vera, Vera;” a hundred voices took up the cry, and Vera opened her eyes to see a multitude of figures gathered about the bed, peering at her with startled looks. “Vera, are you hurt?”

“Hurt?” The girl started up, her golden

hair falling in profusion over her milky neck and shoulders. “What has happened?”

“A burglary—murder—a robbery—thief—;” they all had their own tales to tell and would have smothered the girl, had not a strong hand pushed them back. Johnston, a revolver in one hand, forced his way to the bedside. His eyes sought for the merest fraction of a second, but only that, the astonished figure in the bed.

“Get out,” he cried to the throng; “get out, quick; the whole of you.” The male portion of the gathering had had the tact to withdraw earlier, but the females, as usual, were harder to deal with. They went reluctantly one by one. Johnston was everywhere—commanding, directing, and always obeyed.

Vera, dumfounded, withdrew as far as possible under the coverlets and listened to the hubbub in amazement. Eventually the noise subsided; the people were cleared; and the listener cautiously peeped over the sheets.

In the doorway stood Mrs. Carisson in a wrapper, malignantly glaring at Cecil Johnston, who stood with his chin in his hand, a heavy dressing-gown thrown over his shoulders and an unusually troubled look on his face. At his feet lay the body of a man in white

flannels. The silence was awful. At last the woman in the door raised her arm and pointed to the hall.

"Go," she said, "go at once, *murderer*."

"Madam," Johnston bowed humbly. "I cannot. I must stay by this body." He paused. "I will leave for a minute, however, until Miss Carisson can go into another room." He left the women to themselves and to the horrible thing.

Vera had given but a cursory glance at the man in white, hardly realising even that he was dead. As she got out of bed, however, the full horror of the corpse came upon her. A stream of blackish blood ran over one of his cheeks, forming a puddle on the floor; his hair was matted on that side, rumpled on the other; his face was twisted into an uncouth grimace. In the fleeting glance the girl gave as she rushed from the room she recognised the Hotel Syndicate Manager whom she had seen talking to Johnston, Mr. Nevius.

For the next hour three maids with the help of Vera endeavored to calm her mother, who had promptly fainted at seeing her daughter safe and sound before her again. In the meantime, Blarney, the house detective, and Johnston

were going over the situation in the next room.

"What led you to suspect this man, Mr. Johnston?" Blarney asked.

"Well, you see it was this way;" Johnston sat on the arm of a chair, and looked thoughtfully at the priceless Carisson necklace which he had picked up from the floor. "The fellow came up to me this evening and wanted to know just how much cash we had taken in so far this season, said he was a hotel syndicate manager or something or other; he was very anxious about the safe downstairs and had a funny, shifty kind of look. I told him I felt I had no right to give him any information in Mr. Dobbs's absence."

"Quite right;" Blarney produced a cigar and lit it.

"He went away, but I kept thinking of him; I didn't like his looks; I rather wanted to see him again and get more explanation. After the dance, about 12:30, when everybody had gone upstairs, I turned out the lights and locked up. I went to my room, got undressed and into bed. Somehow I couldn't sleep, I was restless; Nevius's face kept popping into my head and worrying me. Suddenly I had a strong idea

that he meant to rob the safe; this grew until it became an obsession; I felt sure that he was even then at work. I threw on my dressing-gown, took my gun, and went quietly down the back stairs. I came through the back hall, by the glass piazza there, and so around to the office. My instinct had told me right, but apparently too late. The safe was open and the money gone. Just then I happened to look up. There he was, standing at the foot of the stairs, listening. I kept still; he seemed satisfied and crept forward; I followed him, and we went up. He came quietly down the corridor till he was before this door; here he stopped, listened, unlocked the door with that key there,” Johnston pointed to a key lying on the floor near the dead man’s head, “and came in. I wanted to catch him red-handed, so I waited until he had disappeared; then I crawled in after him on my hands and knees. He evidently knew this necklace was here in the house, and didn’t have to look far for its hiding-place, for it was on the floor. I saw it glistening in the dark almost before he did. He picked it up, and I saw him turn; the next instant I knew he must have seen me, for I saw his gun move. Then I fired. I was shooting

from below and got him first crack there in the temple. He fell like a log. Of course the whole hotel was roused, and I did my best to spare Miss Carisson, who had been peacefully sleeping through the whole thing."

Johnston and Blarney sat contemplating the dead man before them.

"Well, Johnston, you did the only thing you could do under the circumstances;" the detective said after a pause. "You are to be congratulated upon the whole."

"I hate to have the poor devil's blood on my hands, though." The younger man arose. "Well, now that you've officially seen the lay of the land, we'd better have this removed at once. Of course this will have to be entirely hushed up."

"Dobbs will be crazy; you'll have to go easy, Johnston."

The clerk nodded rather grimly; the prospect of meeting the manager did not strike him with pleasure. "I'll tell him when he gets back just what I told you," he said, and his mouth shut in a firm straight line. Another pause ensued, finally broken by the detective.

"How much did he get out of the safe?" he



asked abruptly. Johnston ruminated for a moment.

"About six thousand dollars cash."

"We fooled him there all right, all right." Blarney knelt over the body. "Which one do you guess it's in?" he asked, fumbling in the flannel pockets.

"Try the coat," said Johnston, kneeling beside him.

Try the coat they did, and the waistcoat, and the trousers, and the lining, and the shirt, and the socks, shoes, everything, but there was not a trace of the missing money. There were a few notes of a small denomination, and a card with the name,

J. V. H. Castle,

P. D. A.

N. Y.

There were also a gold watch with answering initials, a fountain pen, and a note-book, with nothing but "T. Lannin is on to me all right," scrawled in it. These evidently constituted all the man's belongings.

"I'll be damned," said Johnston getting to his feet; "what the devil do you suppose—Come in, come in."

The door was pushed open and in walked

Henry Defrau, in silk dressing-gown and pajamas.

Johnston's patience with this gentleman was pushed to its breaking-point. His anger was very apparent; Defrau, one of those who always "know it all," was the last kind of person that one wants round in a dilemma, especially when it is a question of accounting for six thousand odd dollars. But Defrau himself apparently enjoyed the situation.

"What's all this deuced row, anyway?" Then seeing the body, "Oh! a little shooting game, eh!" Neither Blarney nor Johnston moved a muscle; there was a pause in which the newcomer took in the situation.

"Mr. Defrau," said the clerk coldly, "can't you find something to pick here?"

Defrau looked at him a moment quizzically. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean *get out!*" Johnston with uncontrolled anger leaped toward him; the newcomer turned, stumbled, picked himself up, and fled without further ado.

*On the floor lay a two hundred dollar bill*, exactly where the man had stumbled. The clerk was the first to see it, and he pounced on it. Like a flash he and Blarney were out in the hall and

pell-mell after the receding figure in the flowered silk dressing-gown. They grabbed the suspect roughly by the collar.

"Look, here, young fellah, we want you," Blarney growled; at the same time Johnston thrust his hand dexterously into the bulging pocket of the silk dressing-gown and produced a roll of bank-notes. Blarney laughed exultantly, "Ah, ah, so there's two in the game, is there? It'll be short work for you, my fine sport."

Defrau through it all appeared perfectly unconcerned. He even coolly asked permission to have his room for a place of confinement until he could offer explanations. This was granted, and with a temporary guard of waiters, bell-boys, and clerks outside, Blarney and Johnston ushered their prisoner into his own chamber, locked the door, and waited for explanations.

Defrau motioned his jailers to two large easy-chairs and offered them cigarettes; he took his time in all his actions, evidently deliberating his course of action. Having lighted his cigarette, he knit his brow, flung himself into a chair, and carefully blew clouds of smoke in meditative silence.

“Come, come, Defrau,” Blarney broke the silence impatiently; “our time is precious.”

“So?” Defrau murmured. “Don’t let me detain you.”

“See here, you fraud,” Johnston burst out, “we want an explanation and we want it quick.”

Defrau turned his head in languid surprise and smiled at the wrathful clerk. “Please be so good, Mr. Johnston, as to refrain from the loud tones, and I will explain all.” He paused and gazed steadily at Blarney. His eyes had a far-away look; he was thinking hard.

“The money,” he said in slow, even tones, “which you took from me, I took from Nevius just after he had robbed the safe; I saw Johnston there, but he didn’t see me, for I got behind a post. Nevius was in a rage and evidently tried to make up for his loss by the necklace.”

“What the devil were you doing in the office at that time of night?” Blarney demanded.

Defrau paid no attention; he was looking at the toe of his slipper absent-mindedly. “Nevius,” he said after a minute or two of suppressed wrath on the part of the cross-examiners, “was I think, the biggest crook on this side of the Atlantic; I knew him the minute I saw him,

for I came across him last year out west in a hotel robbery case and appeared against him in court. When he saw me, he knew I knew, too." The speaker carefully blew a ring of smoke and pierced it with his finger.

"Why didn't you want me to see you?" Johnston asked impatiently.

"I rather wanted to see how you'd handle yourself, young man," said Defrau with a smile.

"Why did you feign ignorance of what had happened, and why didn't you hand over the money directly?" demanded Blarney.

"Wait a minute, gentlemen." Defrau held up his hand. "One at a time, and less rough, if you please; I'm not a criminal." He looked at Johnston rather sharply. "I did not *feign* ignorance, for I had no idea that our friend here would go so far; I stayed behind and went back to my room by the back stairs; I didn't *hold back* the money, because I wasn't even given the chance." Defrau looked ruefully at the torn pocket of his dressing-gown.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Defrau," said Blarney rising abruptly, "but at present your explanations do not hold water, though you are in all probability speaking the truth, and will prove yourself guiltless. You will have to suffer

yourself to be watched, and be more or less on parole until to-morrow noon anyway.”

Defrau stood up, bowed with a frigid nod, and said nothing. In silence the door was unlocked and the two men filed out.

The hotel was up early the next morning; the excitement in the air was tense. Everybody in the establishment knew now of the attempted robbery and the murder, (if an act of self-defense may be so termed), and had some wildly exaggerated idea of how and why it had occurred. As a result, the office desk was overwhelmed by old ladies, old men, young women, and young men, all trying to give up their rooms and find out about the matter at the same time. Before this avalanche stood Johnston, answering here, giving out bills there, entirely obliging and good-natured. Not once during the whole morning, however, did he see that face among the multitude which he most longed for.

Vera and her mother meanwhile had removed to another suite and were spending the morning in bed, in a vain attempt to quiet their nerves. The afternoon they passed in reading. Thus it was about dinner-time before Johnston's longing was gratified. The day had been a night-

mare for him. Dobbs had not yet returned, and the responsibility on the clerk was beginning to tell in the deepening of the lines about the firm mouth, and the tired look under his eyes.

Vera came slowly down the stairs; she wore a close-fitting gown of white, her golden hair was low, showing the regular contour of her head and neck, and covering all but the merest trifle of her tiny ears, from each of which hung a single small and lustrous diamond, brilliant enough to be startling, yet on her not even hinting at anything but dignity and good taste. She was alone, and walking almost suspiciously; about her neck was clasped the glittering necklace.

Johnston could do nothing but stand motionless and silent; the whole hall seemed to be watching her approach in breathless silence. Some even had had it that Miss Carisson had been murdered, and consequently this must be her ghost. Johnston gripped the edge of the desk; what courage the girl had to wear that necklace! How could she face this multitude?

The truth was that Vera, having once been seen by her future husband with the necklace,



felt bound to stick to the will of her father and wear it now before the whole world. She had, besides, only a vague idea that the necklace had been the direct cause of a man's death, the real facts of the tragedy having been kept from her. It had been only with the greatest persuasion that Mrs. Carisson had allowed her daughter to go down to dinner at all, knowing nothing, however, of the wearing of the gems.

Straight to the desk Vera went, and for the first time that day she smiled. The crowd peered and nudged, winked and coughed, but the couple neither saw nor heard them.

She leaned toward Johnston the way she had done so many times before. He leaned toward her, in his eyes wonder and admiration.

“Vera,” he asked softly, “are you very, very angry with me?”

“With you!” He eyes reproached him for even entertaining such a suspicion. “Why should I be angry with you? You saved my life.”

“I should hardly say that,” said Johnston with true modesty. “But why did you put the necklace on again, Vera?”

The girl blushed and avoided his glance, looking steadfastly at a pencil and pad before her.

"You look just as beautiful without it," Johnston encouraged with his odd little smile. A tiny frown played between her eye-brows, and Johnston broke the rather embarrassed silence.

"Vera, let's go out on the piazza, or down among the trees and get this thing over. I know you are keeping something from me, and we can't talk here."

She nodded, and in a minute he was by her side.

As they moved slowly toward the big doors, Henry Defrau, immaculate and breezy as ever, in spite of his rather criminal notoriety, which had spread like wildfire among the guests, sauntered down the grand stairway and casually watched the couple go out on the piazza. He paused a minute as if irresolute, lit a cigarette, and then followed.

The full moon was rising over the trees; the after-twilight of a summer evening had yielded to the mild and half illuminated purple of the coming darkness.

Vera and Johnston walked through the hall, the glassed dining-piazzas, the open piazzas, and down the big front steps, toward the hammocks in a grove of tall pine-trees. Vera half stumbled

once and Cecil gently took her arm, which was not withdrawn. They went to a large hammock where they sat down, very close together. The gathering darkness almost obliterated them in the shadow of the trees.

Defrau smiled pleasantly to himself as he threw away his cigarette and stepped out into the moonlight. The girl's white dress was fast losing itself in the blackness of the grove, flashing every now and then with fading brilliance as a crevice in the tree-tops allowed penetration of the moon's rays.

The watcher, however, did not permit the couple to be entirely lost, for he slowly followed in their track, keeping merely the vaguest outlines of their figures before him. He paused for a moment when he saw them seat themselves in the hammock; then he walked forward briskly.

“Good evening,” he said lifting his hat but ignoring Johnston, who was frowning angrily.

“Good evening;” Vera looked at him coldly, her eyes sparkling like the jewels at her throat. Defrau's eyes were sparkling too; he stepped near.

“Permit me, Miss Carisson,” he said in a smooth, insinuating voice, “but may I disturb

you a moment?" He had scarcely finished the words before his arms were deftly round her neck. She was too startled even to cry out, and Defrau was bowing politely, *the necklace in his hand*, before she realised what had happened. Johnston had sprung to his feet, but was standing idly by. Defrau looked at him triumphantly. Vera stared in amazement.

"Cecil, Cecil!" she gasped, rising and staggering toward him with outstretched arms. "Why don't you, why, why—Oh, protect me!"

Johnston held her off, an indescribable expression on his handsome face, a mixture of remorse, regret, and whole-souled admiration. "Please, Vera," he said softly, "don't make it any harder than it is for me."

"What!" The girl recoiled gasping, staring. The two men stood silent, looking at the panting woman.

"Good-bye, Vera;" Johnston held out his hand. The words fell like a thunderbolt in the stillness; Defrau began idly playing with the necklace.

The tremor in the clerk's voice and his unsteady hand belied the attempted matter-of-factness of his tone. In the moonlight his face looked pale and drawn. "I've loved you,

Vera,” he said hoarsely, “more than I’ve ever loved any other woman in my whole life; with that you must be satisfied, for I cannot marry you—or anyone else. I—”

“Come on, Berry, that’s enough of the soft stuff.” Defrau laid hold of the clerk’s arm impatiently. “You always get into it too far. Good-bye, Vera,” he added, smiling sardonically, “it’s generally a toss-up which one of us they like, but you seem to know your mind pretty well, eh?”

The lights of a motor swung out of the garage and down the avenue, stopping near the grove, where the whir of the engine was plainly audible. “Are you going to stay here all night?” Defrau asked. Johnston paid no attention, but moved slowly toward the slender figure in white, huddled back in the hammock, the golden head bowed in convulsive sobs.

“Vera,” he murmured, “please say at least, ‘Good-Bye.’ I’ve meant all I’ve said, and felt all I showed, but I have to play the game.”

She lifted her head and looked at him through her tears. “Who are you, and what have you been doing? Oh! go away! go away!” She grew hysterical, laughing loud and brokenly.

“Vera,” he bent over close, “Vera, I’m

Berry McFarlane, and Defrau there is Tom Lannin; we're thieves, Vera, thieves. And now I've killed a man." The girl screamed and cowered back. She could hardly believe her ears. McFarlane, alias Johnston, paid no attention, but hurried on. "I tell you this, Vera, because I love you."

The girl clutched her bosom and staggered to her feet. "You! You!" she gasped.

Defrau, alias Lannin, seized McFarlane by the coat. "You fool," he hissed angrily, "what are you doing?"

Johnston pushed him away. "It was I, Vera, who robbed the safe; it was I who shot Castle, the detective, when he followed me to your room after I had seen the necklace and was going to steal it; it was I who made Defrau here seem guilty, I who made him persecute you and me, and so ripen our friendship till I could locate the necklace." He was breathing hard; the perspiration broke out on his forehead. Defrau stood by dumfounded.

"Well, it was me," said that gentleman after a pause, "who took most of the gasoline out of your car that first night; I want some credit here, for I had the devil of a job doing it in the garage there, let me tell you."

Vera sat like one in a trance; she was too astounded to scream, and too frightened to go away. "You did all that?" she asked slowly, horror-struck, "You, You?"

"I did," Johnston nodded, "I wouldn't have gone so far, Vera, but I *had* to keep it up until I could get rid of Dobbs to get at the safe, or find out if you had your necklace. I liked your friendship and for the first time I began to return love. Nevius, the detective whose real name was Castle, forced me to act, for he knew Lannin and I thought he suspected me from his questions. Then I saw you with the necklace, so I acted that night: I was tired of the clerk life, anyway, and Lannin here was getting impatient. I never thought I'd have to shoot Castle." Then after a pause: "We'll have a hard pull now."

Johnston seemed to have rid himself of a great burden; he stood up and squared his shoulders. Defrau looked at him, his wrath giving way to astonishment. "What the devil *has* got into you, Berry? I never saw you act this way before."

The clerk looked at him thoughtfully. "I don't know, Tom, just what is the matter; I guess I'm in love."



He turned to the girl; she had sunk down on the ground. "Vera, Vera," he whispered, but he received no answer. Tenderly he picked her up and placed her in a little white and gold mass in the hammock.

"Good-bye, Vera," he whispered softly in the tiny ear, and turned away.

The motor whirred, the lights moved slowly on to the road. The silent chauffeur bent over the wheel, the car shot forward, and the two passengers breathed in the fresh night air, exhilarating in the rush of the cool wind.

The great full moon had slowly climbed the sky, the tiny red tail-light of the machine had long since disappeared over the distant hills, but still the forlorn little figure lay motionless in the hammock, a tumbled mass of white and gold.

GERALD COURTNEY.

# THAT DAY IN AFRICA





## THAT DAY IN AFRICA

### A True Tale

**T**HUD — THUMP — BANG! Masharia had fallen into the chop box and the day had begun. Masharia was our tent-boy who washed our clothes, made our beds, etc.; and whenever he came anywhere near a tent-rope, he tripped over it and went flat on his face. Sometimes he would see one, and, in avoiding that, fall foul of another. Sometimes he would not see any at all and go crash over the first one. It made no difference. He invariably came to grief, if a tent-rope was in sight.

Being thoroughly aroused and seeing that my companions, Coolidge and Willetts, were awake also, I decided to get up. A struggle into dew-soaked clothes, a quick duck into a bowl of icy water, soapless—for Coolidge had locked the soap in one of his boxes and forgotten which—and I emerged from the tent just in time to meet Sowedi, the cook, clad in a

gorgeous grin and a rather dirty fez, bearing aloft steaming plates of oatmeal. By this time the whole camp was up, and the "niggers" were flitting through the dim morning light, striking their tents, gathering their cooking pots, and generally preparing for the day's march.

Our camp was pitched on the middle one of the three ridges which make up the Mau Escarpment. Before us the ground fell away sharply into a little valley, across which the last ridge rose perpendicularly some two hundred feet. Our trail led straight across this ridge, down the other side to the plains, and across these some ten or twelve miles to the Siavé River, where our next camp was to be. We were travelling entirely by map for none of our "niggers" had been in this region before. There are no detailed maps of the country, so as I looked ours over, the best I could do was to get the general lie of the land, and note the bearings of several prominent hills near by. It was my custom to get under way ahead of the safari, so that its noise might not disturb the game which I was hunting. Sometimes I went entirely alone, but this morning I took my gun boy, Mariabibi by name, to carry my camera and to go for safari porters, in case I

got any game I carried my water-bottle and my .405 Winchester repeater.

As we two started down into the valley, the sun poked up over Mt. Suswa, and our shadows stalked sedately before us through the dewy grass. The big sleeping-tent was just being packed as we left, so we had a good twenty-minute start of the rest of the safari. The grass at the bottom of the valley grew very tall, and the heavy dew soaked us to the neck long before we reached the base of the ridge. Here I told Mariabibi to drop back and follow me about a quarter of a mile behind, for the kudu, for which I was specially hunting, is one of the wariest beasts in Africa, and one man always makes less noise than two. So I started up the side of the ridge alone. Real mountain-climbing it was, too, for you had to crawl up the sheer side of the rock, working from ledge to ledge, hanging on by toes and finger-tips. In spite of the difficulty fortune favored me here, for moccasins on rock make no noise, and I arrived at the last ledge breathless, but satisfied that if anything was on top, it had not heard me.

Very slowly I raised my head over the crest and peered through the fringe of grass. Noth-

ing to the right—nothing straight ahead—but way off to the left, behind that bit of thorn scrub, something moved, surely. Ten seconds passed—twenty; and then from behind the scrub came a grey-buff animal, and the staring white stripes, running down its sides like a harness, told me it was a kudu. My hopes jumped, and then fell again, for as it came out against the sky, I saw that it had no horns but that it was a cow. Another movement in the scrub, but only another cow. And then—about twenty feet behind the other two he came, a greater kudu bull, stalking proudly along, his heavy, spiral horns clean-outlined against the blue beyond.

Slowly I brought my rifle up, and then lowered it again. Three hundred yards was a long shot, and the grass and scrub ahead offered good protection for stalking. Down below the ledge I dropped again and shifted along, coming up so that there was a bit of scrub between the game and me. Half crouching I advanced, peeking ahead from time to time very carefully to see if they were disturbed. Fifteen yards covered—twenty; and then a short crawl to the side, belly-down in the long grass, to get behind another patch of scrub. Twenty-five



yards—thirty; and I lowered my rifle-sights from three hundred to two hundred and fifty. Thirty-five yards — forty — forty-five — fifty. Snap—a dead twig cracked under my foot. I could have sworn that nothing could have heard that little snap fifty yards away, much less two hundred and fifty, but when I peered round the bush, the cows had left their feeding and were staring about in all directions, their tails swishing nervously, ready for instant flight, The old bull too was alert, with head high in the air, a perfect target against the sky.

But a target's being perfect does not make it much easier to hit, when it is beyond your usual shooting range. The long grass hindered my shooting also. On the open plains where I had been hunting, the grass was burned so short that you could shoot from a kneeling position. But here, unless I stood straight up, the waving grass-tops got in the way of my sights. However, the kudus were disturbed, and much as I longed for the added steadiness of my knee, I had to shoot standing up. Carefully I raised my rifle. The sights came on, just at the base of the neck, just forward of the shoulder blade. Crack; and as the rifle exploded I swore to myself, for in my nervous-

ness I had jerked on the trigger and pulled up just a tiny bit.

“I’ve missed him,” thought I, and then jumped forward, for he had gone down as if a battering-ram had hit him. “But there’s something queer here,” I said to myself as I ran towards him, for instead of the dull thud which a bullet makes when it strikes an animal, I had heard a sharp “spat,” as if I had hit a rock. The cows were off at the shot, but I paid no attention to them, watching only the spot where the bull had gone down. I had covered scarcely fifty yards when he rolled up into view again. My rifle came up in an instant, but he was quicker and was off behind a bush before I could fire. He reappeared once or twice, galloping along through the trees, but never long enough for a shot, and I soon lost sight of him altogether.

Things get all out of proportion in one’s mind out there in Africa, and when I saw that kudu disappear, I felt as if all my past life had gone for naught, and my future seemed empty. Here I had got in range of a greater kudu, had had a clean shot at him, and he had got away! What was there left to live for?

When I came to the spot where he had fallen, I

searched for traces of blood, but there was not even a spatter. The ground was still wet from the dew, however, and I was able to follow his tracks quite easily. The trail led off along the top of the ridge, bending to the left until once more I looked right down into the valley, from which I had climbed earlier. A herd of hartebeest were grazing just below, and I could have tossed a pebble on them. For some distance the tracks led along the edge of the ridge, till they came out on a rock plateau, and there I lost them. I suppose that if I had taken the time to go all round that plateau, I could have picked them up again, but I was so angry with myself, that I did not have the patience, so I struck off at random towards the middle of the ridge again. I had covered about half a mile, when out of the corner of my eye I noticed something moving, and turned just in time to see one of the cows vanish into the trees. They were out of sight, so I doubled up as low as possible and ran towards where the cow had disappeared. As I drew nearer I slowed down to a fast walk, and then stopped dead as the two cows walked out into plain view, hardly more than a hundred yards distant. They seemed very nervous still, but, since they were not looking in my

direction, I knew that I was unseen. Full half a minute I watched them as they stood, and then I almost gave a cheer.

Forty yards beyond the cows was a thick bunch of thorn trees, out of which appeared the bull. Right out into the open he walked and then stopped, gazing round in all directions. Every now and then he would shake his great head, as a horse does when a fly lights on his forehead. Almost broadside on he stood, a perfect target, and now in perfect range. As I raised my rifle and the sights came on, I felt that I could place my bullet to a hair. The roar of the rifle was echoed by the solid thud of the striking bullet, but the kudu hardly twitched. Up went his heels in a half-bucking little kick, and away he went out of sight into the trees, with me after him on the run. Just beyond the belt of trees into which he disappeared was an open space, and beyond that a dense cedar thicket. This thicket was about a hundred yards long by thirty broad, so thick that you could not see ten feet ahead. Down one side I tore, following the noise of his great body crashing through the cedars. All at once he stopped, and I stopped also. In there somewhere he was, that I was certain of, but

where, I had not the slightest idea. I walked a short way along the edge of the thicket, and then, discovering a little tunnel under the branches, plunged in. A twig snapped somewhere, but I could not be sure in what direction, so I just pushed on as quietly as possible. Foot by foot I worked along, peering ahead between the branches and creepers.

Now a curious thing happened. I suddenly realised that there was a strange heavy odor in the air. I knew the smell, and yet, for the moment, I could not place it. All at once it came to me—that afternoon scarcely a month before, the dead eland on the ground, and Mariabibi and I, blood up to the shoulders, slitting and pulling, as we worked off the heavy hide. Blood—that was what this smell was like—fresh eland blood; and the eland is first cousin to the kudu.

He must be near, I thought to myself, and turned up wind. A moment later the thicket opened before me and I stepped out into a narrow alley. It was a *cul de sac* about ten yards long, and, there at the opposite end, was the kudu. He was kneeling, back to me, but when I appeared he struggled to his feet. As he rose, he whirled toward me, down went his

head, and on he came. I am not conscious of any thought about aiming or pulling the trigger. That part of my actions seems to have been governed by a division of my brain entirely instinctive, which impelled my body to do these things and left my conscious brain to look on. As the kudu struggled to his feet, my rifle came up, and my first bullet struck his shoulder as he whirled. He had not advanced more than three or four steps when my second bullet struck him, fair in the back of the neck, just as he dropped his head for the charge. Down he went, his horns pointing forward, their tips scarcely two yards from where I stood. Even as he fell my rifle covered him, this time fair on the brain; but I did not fire, for I saw he was done, and I did not want to smash the skull.

It is curious that vivid as the picture is to me—the dim light of the thicket, the dead kudu lying before me with my smoking rifle still covering him, and the two reports ringing in my ears—crack, crack, just as quick as you can clap your hands—yet I have no remembrance of pulling the trigger or snapping in the fresh cartridge. The whole incident seems to me now like a moving picture film, which you can look



at piece by piece, so that you see the motions of every character inch by inch, but when you run it through a camera, the action is almost too fast to follow. I remember every move of the kudu; I remember wondering rather idly whether I could jump between his horns if my rifle failed to stop him; I remember thinking that a bullet would smash his skull badly, and spoil it for mounting. And yet the crack, crack, of the rifle condenses the whole picture into a fraction of a second.

Now that he was done for, I began to think normally once more. A blast from my whistle brought an answering shout from Mariabibi, and soon, guided by the sound of my voice, he came pushing through the brush. When a "nigger" wants to emphasise a word, he draws it out very long, and Mariabibi's "ku-u-ubwa sa-a-ana" (very big), when he saw the kudu, lasted some time. He and I examined the head carefully and found that my first bullet had struck one of the horns a glancing blow. The stunning effect of this shock must have been terrific, for as I have said, it knocked the kudu flat, and it was on account of this that he was shaking his head when I saw him again. It was also owing to this shock that



I was able to come up with him again, for under ordinary conditions a kudu, once alarmed, will travel several miles before he stops. My next two shots were both in vital spots, the first through the lungs, and the second through the heart. But, with the extraordinary vitality common to all African animals, he kept on coming till my final bullet smashed his neck-bone. This preliminary inspection over, I sent Mariabibi back to fetch some porters from the safari, and I started skinning.

For half an hour I worked, till finally it came over me that Mariabibi had been gone for a very long time, so I came out of the thicket to look round. A few blasts of my whistle brought Mariabibi all right, but of the safari porters there was not a sign. They had taken a different trail, and passed by about a mile to our right. This annoyed me a good deal, because it meant that Mariabibi and I should have to carry the head and skin, and besides, all the good meat would go to waste. But the idea of losing the safari never entered my head.

Three-quarters of an hour's work saw the skin off and Mariabibi and me ready to start. He carried the skin, which weighed about sixty pounds, and I shouldered the head.

This weighed some ten pounds more, but it made a pleasanter burden than the raw, bloody skin. Indeed with my arms thrust through the spirals of the horns, and the skull on my shoulder, it made an excellent pack, even though it did drip down all over my neck most disgracefully.

We did not go back to pick up the safari trail, but stuck off cross-country straight down the slope, knowing that in time we must come to the Siavé River.

Now the wart-hog, besides being without doubt the ugliest beast on earth, is most annoying in his manners. He digs his holes anywhere and everywhere, and the long grass springing up on the new turned earth soon masks these pitfalls, and renders them doubly dangerous. My pride, as I strode down the slope, was at its highest point and due for a fall. The fall came—into a wart-hog hole. Kudu head, gun, and self went down with a crash; but not flat, for I managed to disentangle one arm from the horns and partially broke my fall. As my hand struck the ground I felt a sharp pain, but thinking that I had merely run a thorn into it, I did not examine it at once. Indeed I lay just as I fell, with my weight half

resting on my hand, while I disentangled the kudu head and unslung my gun. Then I arose and drew my hand out of the grass to examine it. There, hanging to my little finger, its jaws firmly locked in the flesh, was a small snake.

I have had a few unpleasant moments in my life, but nothing ever struck me so unpleasantly as the sight of that little snake. Grey-green he was, only about eighteen inches long, but it was enough to give me the kind of a start I never want again. I made a grab for him with my other hand, but he dropped off before I could grasp him and was lost in the grass. Luckily I carried a small packet of permanganate of potash in my pocket, and it did not take long to get it out and decide to use it.

I took my sheath-knife, placed the edge where the two little fang-marks showed black on my finger, looked the other way, and pulled till I felt the steel grate on the bone. Again I cut, crossways this time, and taking some permanganate crystals, I pushed them deep into the wound. The permanganate stung a good deal, but the pain reassured me, for it proved that the medicine was doing something anyway. With my handkerchief I fashioned a rough tourni-

quet, and winched it up with my rifle barrel as a lever. So having done everything in my power. I sat down in an open space near by, took out my watch, and waited. Mariabibi, who had been wandering along a little to one side when I fell, soon came back and watched the proceedings with great interest.

Waiting under the circumstances was a most unpleasant occupation. I knew only in a general way where my friends were, and I was certain that they had no idea where I was. The snake, to be sure, might not be poisonous, but then again he might be, and the effectiveness of permanganate is in grave doubt. I thought of writing a note and sending it to Coolidge, in case—well, in case the snake *was* poisonous and the permanganate did not work; but I had no pencil or paper. Mariabibi, I knew, would appropriate all my effects and go his own way, the moment I lost consciousness. I suppose I was in no greater danger than when the kudu charged me, perhaps not so great; but here the danger was slow, and I could do nothing to avert it. I was looking into The Shadow, with no excitement, no fight to keep it off, and I was afraid.

Ten minutes went by in silence, and nothing

happened. Mariabibi had been watching my hand with almost as much interest as I. Suddenly he spoke.

“Mkono yake eko eussi. Wewe takufa, Bwana.” Which being interpreted means, “Your hand is black. You are going to die, Master.” The tourniquet had stopped all circulation below the wrist, and consequently my hand had turned a greyish blue. Mariabibi had noticed this, and so promptly gave me his cheering reassurance. I explained to him the action of a tourniquet, and why my hand was grey. But my Swahili was not of a surgical order, and his nod of understanding was not very positive. Somewhere I had read that if nothing happened within half an hour after a snake bite, it was all right. My faith was pinned on this rule (which I have since learned is entirely wrong), and when the hands of my watch crept round to the half hour, and nothing happened beyond a slight swelling of the injured finger, I breathed freely once more, and prepared to go on. With some permanganate solution mixed in my hat, I washed out the wound, and bound it up with a strip torn from my handkerchief. Then, loaded with our trophies, we started down the slope again.

It seemed that my luck had been all used up in getting the kudu, for when we had covered the mile or two to the bottom of the slope—hard going it was too—we found our way barred by a deep river. Back we went, the whole distance again, and for me every patch of grass and every bit of scrub was the home of a snake. By the time we regained the top of the ridge, it was nearly noon, and we were both hot and tired. So I decreed a rest, and for half an hour the smoke of my pipe smoothed out all my cares.

Half an hour is but half an hour, however, and the end of it drove us up and on once more. Back, almost to our last night's camp we went, picked up the trail of the safari, and started down the slope anew. In a short time we came to a Masai village, and the usual ceremony took place; all the old bucks heaved themselves up from their goat-skins, on which they sit, and advancing one by one, shook my hand and solemnly uttered "Soba." I returned an equally solemn "Soba," and our greeting was over. Mariabibi drew back a short distance during this ceremony, for he was a Kikuyu, who is far beneath the Masai in rank. We found out which way the safari had gone, and



tried to hire a Masai buck to carry the kudu head, but all the men were too proud to do manual labor.

So on we trudged by ourselves across the plain, following the native trails when they led our way, and travelling cross-country when they didn't. From time to time we would pass through a Masai village, or meet a guardian of their flocks, standing gaunt and grim, his great spear driven into the ground beside him.

It was while crossing a stream that we met our second snake. Mariabibi was climbing down the steep bank, when I heard him cry "Nyoka" (snake), and turned to see him leap up and out, just as a small snake shot under his feet. It was a close shave, and only the incredibly keen eyesight and quickness of the native saved him. The snake was still in sight wriggling in the water below, so we both turned to and bombarded him with stones, till his white belly, floating up, told us the work was done.

By this time it was after three and we had covered about fifteen miles since leaving camp. We were able to follow the trail of the safari partly by information from the natives, and partly by signs, picked up as we travelled along. About four I finally succeeded in hiring a Masai



to carry the kudu head, and thus relieved I made much easier weather of it. We arrived at the edge of the Siavé River about half past four.

My troubles were not over yet, for now the problem arose as to which direction camp was in. The river ran through a gorge some two hundred feet deep, its sides almost perpendicular. The edge of this gorge was so densely wooded with thorn scrub and cedar, that it was impossible to get a good view of the riverbed below. I fired off my rifle as a signal, thinking that the camp would be near enough to answer. But no answer came. I fired again; still no answer; and then it dawned on me that we were lost. As a matter of fact, the camp was quite near and heard my first signal and all subsequent ones, but by some curious freak of sound, the answering shots, all except one later, lost their power echoing back and forth from the sides of the gorge, and so were never heard by me.

The fact that I was lost did not cause me any alarm, because I knew that I should find camp some time; but I had been on the go now for ten hours without food, and was extremely tired and hungry. The prospect of not reaching camp and not getting a good meal disturbed

me immensely. Especially, I remember, I hated the idea of missing jam for supper. We had laid in a large supply of exceedingly good jam just before starting on this safari, and my mouth watered at the mere thought of it.

One way was as good as another, so down the river we turned, and trudged on. A quarter of an hour went by and no sign of camp, so I fired my rifle again. No reply, and on we went. Another fifteen minutes and again an enquiring shot. This time there was a reply. Far off in the distance it sounded, one single boom. I answered with two shots in quick succession, but no second shot came to our ears. Of course the question was which direction the sound came from. I said up the river, Mariabibi said down; and the Masai did not know. I trusted Mariabibi's ears above my own, so we moved on down the river. Really, when we heard that shot, the camp was directly below us on the river bank, but the muffling echoes made the noise seem a great distance off. I fired my rifle at regular intervals, until I had but one magazine full of cartridges left. Then I stopped, for it looked like a possible night in the open, and it is always well to have a few shots left if you are going to be out after dark.

By half past five I was worn out, and Mariabibi was hardly able to walk; so all further search for the camp was out of the question. There were two alternatives: one to camp in the open, and the other to spend the night in a Masai village. To camp in the open I was most unwilling, as it would mean keeping a large fire going all night to frighten the lions off; and tired as Mariabibi and I were, we were in no mood to face any night watches. The Masai said that there was a village "mbali kidogo" (a little distance). "A little distance" to the native means anything from ten feet to ten miles, but nevertheless I hoped for the best and told him to lead on.

The sun had now gone down behind the hills, and the swift-dropping tropical night was upon us. A jackal cried near by and was answered by the high screeching laugh of a hyena. Then grumbling through the darkness came the low, whining grunt of a lion. Mariabibi and the Masai moved closer to me, and I unslung my rifle. So we went through the darkness, and after the manner of the *Jungle Book*, the beasts sung to us on our way.

After almost an hour's walk we emerged into an opening in the scrub, and before me in the

starlight I saw a Masai village. We stood outside the brush gate and called, until a shadow moved in the gloom before us, and a young Masai enquired our errand. After a short explanation, the gate was opened, and we passed into the circle of the village.

A Masai village is made up of a lot of huts ranged in a ring, their doors facing inwards. There is one gap in the ring which forms the gate. At night all the cattle and sheep of the villagers are driven into the kraal made by the huts, and the gate is closed with brush. Thus both inhabitants and animals are safe from the lions and other marauders which abound in the neighborhood. The livestock wander round in the village, passing in and out of the huts at will. When the village becomes too foul, it is abandoned and a new one built; but never, by any chance, is the village cleaned. Consequently its smell ranks well up among the famous smells of the world.

Each hut is about fifteen feet square, with about four-foot head room. It is built of cow-dung, dried on a frame of withes, and while in repair is water-tight under moderate showers. No window or chimney is provided, the only entrance and exit for men, animals, and smoke

being the door. The village I stayed in was made up of some twenty huts, sheltering about a hundred people. The cattle and sheep in the kraal must have numbered from four to five hundred.

Our host left us after he had put back the brush gate, but soon returned and conducted us to an empty hut. His wife, who, by the way, was the nearest approach to non-ugliness that I ever saw among the natives, soon appeared and kindled a fire. Then, after a wait of fifteen minutes, the old head-man of the village appeared. Tall, gaunt, and grey, he slipped into the hut, shook hands, "sobaed," and took up his position by the fire. After him came all the old men and bucks, each with a solemn handshake and a "soba." All squatted round the fire and kept silent waiting for me to speak. But, since I talked only Swahili, and they talked only Masai, our conversation was limited. Mariabibi, however, spoke a little Masai, and acted as interpreter. My first demand was for food, and in a few minutes food came, in the shape of a live sheep, which baaed vociferously at having its night's rest so rudely disturbed. It was led before me and I was asked whether it suited me. As far as I could

see, it did; so I said so, and in a few moments it was being butchered. Its chops, cooked in their own fat without salt, and tough beyond all imagination, were nevertheless extremely acceptable, and I did nobly by them. The Masai did equally nobly by the rest of him, and soon there were only a few bits left, which I directed Mariabibi to remove and save for the morrow's breakfast. The meal was topped off with a long draught of vile-tasting, smoked milk, and then a pipe. The food loosened the Masai's tongues, and they conversed freely among themselves. Their language seemed to me almost wholly devoid of consonants, and sounded something after this fashion.

Buck No. 1, "Leheoiyalalusasa."

Chorus of Bucks, "A-a-aye."

Buck No. 2, "Okahahasasabwiesioi."

Chorus of Bucks, "A-a-aye."

And so it went, the short speech by one, and then the long chorus of "A-a-aye."

As I could not understand a word, their conversation did not greatly interest me, so I looked the ground over for the night. In one corner of the hut was a sort of stall, with a rough bed of brush. On this I spread the skin which my Masai host had furnished me, and

placing my cartridge-belt, camera, and water-bottle at the head of the stall, so that no one could steal them, I stretched myself out. My rifle I kept by my side, loaded, as was always my custom when in the open. Before I closed my eyes I took one last glance round the hut. The Masai were still squatting there, their gaunt, stern faces showing dimly by the smoky light of the dying fire, and as I dropped off to sleep, their solemn chorus of "A-a-aye" still rung in my ears.

The long day was over, but my troubles were not quite ended yet. About midnight I was awakened by something touching my feet. The dim starlight silhouetted a great dark form, half in the doorway. My rifle was in my hands instantly, but I dropped it with a smile. The intruder was nothing more dangerous than a cow, which retired speedily when I gently but firmly kicked it in the nose. The rest of the night I slept with my feet in the doorway, for I did not fancy the idea of a cow stepping on my face.

With the first daylight I got up, raked the fire together, and cooked breakfast. By the time the meal was finished, the congress of bucks were back again round the fire, while



a second congress of women and children crowded close around the doorway. One of the men noticed my bandaged finger, so, through Mariabibi, I told them how the snake had bitten me, but how my "dawa msouri sa-a-ana" (very good medicine indeed) had saved me. At once they were all interested to see my "dawa," which I took out and showed to them, finally ending by presenting it to the head-man, with full instructions as to its use, and a most horrible warning against eating it. Then, having invited all the sick of the village to my camp to be doctored, Mariabibi and I set off towards the river again.

Scarcely half a mile had we covered, when a shot rang out close by, and soon about ten of my porters hove in sight. They had been sent out as a search-party and were tremendously pleased to see me. All of them, wreathed in smiles, surrounded me, each bearing some little packet of food. They had brought the mule with them, and mounted on this, I proceeded in triumph to the camp. Now my troubles were really over; my joy was complete; and besides, one of the packages was jam sandwiches.

DUNCAN DANA.

PEOPLE DON'T DO SUCH THINGS





## PEOPLE DON'T DO SUCH THINGS



WE ANGLO-SAXONS take our philosophy as we do our religion. Our religion we put on with our best clothes to air it for an hour or two every Sunday, if we are very religious. Our philosophy is just about as deep, and we make it a topic for tea-table conversation. Not that we believe half of what we preach, no; but it is interesting to discuss. There are other races and they are different. And that brings me to my story.

Tina kept the office of a small Cambridge apartment house. She was of Russian family and hers was the Russian type of beauty. A little habit of hers was to look at you and smile with her eyes as if she believed everything you said, which sometimes embarrassed people. She moved with the quick, free grace of unaffected girlhood—each motion an unconscious pose for the eye of an artist.

Rogerson was the typical philosophically

inclined undergraduate. A lively talker, a ready "mixer," he was well liked. He followed Ibsen closely, was a leading light in some college philosophical society, and his professors called him "promising." A great many fellows misunderstood him, and so, of course, called him a "high brow." Schopenhauer's pessimism and Nietzsche's militaristic utilitarianism were the foundations of his youthful, half-baked philosophy. He was at the age when youth begins to feel the responsibility of bettering the world, and you know what that means. Although he was conventional enough in every-day life, his mind was a hot-bed of ideas, strong, turbulent, socialistic, bordering on anarchy and red fire. He was an interesting speaker, if you cared to listen.

Rogerson found Tina very easy to entertain—humorous but never coarse, like so many girls with so little to do and look forward to. She was deeply impressed by the cleverness of the college man. Then she was feminine, and that always attracts a boy. Acquaintance ripened into friendship, and friendship into intimacy. Rogerson rather enjoyed "dropping in" for a few moments during the day, when the time was heavy on his hands.

One evening they were on their way to the theatre, for Tina's "broader education." Rogerson was opening up the world of philosophy to her amazed eyes. Tina had no philosophy. She only believed in God, and in the Good and Right—very old-fashioned and silly for this enlightened age. The play was Ibsen's "Ghosts"—not too pretty a story for a young girl with a wholesome life to lead. It made a profound impression on Tina; she scarcely spoke all the way home. To Rogerson, who gloated in its cynicism, the play was an old story. Vain subterfuges, shattered ideals, broken lives gave Rogerson a chance to expand. In the rush and roar of the subway he exploited his theories. He believed in the survival of the fit, in the elimination of the unfit. This is to be a world of combat; peace and good-will mean stagnation. Rogerson enjoyed himself immensely.

Tina stood at her door in a daze, looking after Rogerson's retreating figure. What did it all mean? "Survival of the fit, elimination of the unfit. A world of combat . . . stagnation." It was all very strange, and yet it seemed very real. Why hadn't she ever thought of it before? It was so simple after all. Of course that was

the logical philosophy of life. In her intense earnestness she took it very much to heart.

Rogerson returned to his room with a smile. What a serious little girl she was! That was a good play, though. Ibsen couldn't be beaten when it came to the real understanding of human existence. He chuckled when he thought again of Tina's unsophisticated amazement and sympathetic interest in the play and in his philosophy. "I shall have to talk to her. She is 'promising,' and could be educated up to Ibsen. He ought to mean a lot to a girl like her."

They met often in the next month or two. Rogerson found her company more and more agreeable; she was an interesting study. There were long walks on the river-banks when much was said—by Rogerson. "You see, the real reason we are here is the advancement of the race. We are striving for the perfect. Nietzsche with his 'big blond brute,' you know. The only social lines are those determined by mental and physical strength. Just look, you and I—" Rogerson stopped, he did not know exactly why. Tina seemed to be looking away into the distance with dreamy eyes and parted lips. She did not seem to notice that he had stopped talking.



She was very beautiful as she stood there in the fresh breeze with that dreamy far-away look. Rogerson would not have admitted that he was a "flirt," but he did not try very hard to resist the temptation to put his arm round her. She turned, smiled up at him, and shyly rested her hand on his shoulder. "Dear girl," he whispered, gazing into her piercing earnest black eyes.

"Do you mean it?" She looked at him happily.

Rogerson gave the answer that all men give to such a question. This and much more he did and said; he enjoyed himself immensely.

They were on their way to "Hedda Gabler" a few evenings later. A careless search for gloves brought a small white envelope out from Rogerson's pocket. "The girl I'm engaged to—lots of money," he remarked off hand. "She is wonderful, simply wonderful—the kind of girl a king would be proud to make his queen. Pretty, you know, but not like a doll. Lots of character in her face, and just to hear her laugh, you can't help loving her. We shall be very happy." Tina winced, held herself very straight, and looked ahead. "This play is rather unusual," he continued, "perhaps Ibsen's

best. Silly woman gets into a rotten hole, and has to accept the only possible way out. The solution fits in awfully well, you know." Tina seemed absorbed.

The plush curtain drew up in its gilded frame for the third act. Hedda had urged the man she loved to suicide; her husband was indifferent to her; she must become the mistress of a man she despised. Glittering, beautiful, and sinuous, Mme. Nazimova as Hedda, with her wonderful skill and feeling, held Tina spell-bound and gasping. In her own little wounded, oversensitive soul Tina saw herself in a similar position. The man she loved was engaged—the man in whom she had placed all her faith and happiness. The gate to the perfect life which had hung open for her entranced gaze shut with a final, chilling clang.

Hedda laughed, a high-pitched, screaming, scornful, desperate laugh, the laugh of a woman who is on her way to Hell and does not care. Tina's face went white and tense. How would Hedda solve it? The shot on the stage rang out. Suicide! Tina gave a startled gasp. The last surprised, ironic words of the play echoed in her ears: "May God take pity on us, people don't *do* such things." Rogerson turned to

her with a smile. He had not the understanding to see that her face was pale and set, and that she quivered as she plunged warped hatpins through her worn little bonnet.

They were at the varnished door of her modest rooms.

"I hope you enjoyed the play," Rogerson smiled down at her.

"Indeed, yes. You and Ibsen have taught me a lot. Good night."

He kissed her trembling lips and closed the door after him with a smile. A laugh followed him—a high-pitched, screaming, scornful, desperate laugh. Did it remind him of "Hedda"? He turned, but the door was shut. At the foot of the cool, white stairs he paused in the shining vestibule to light his cigarette. A shot boomed and echoed in the hall. Rogerson's heart stopped; then it raced frantically, and he felt sick; a cold, drenching sweat broke out all over him. He jumped up the stairs and burst open the flimsy door.

"My God! People *don't* do such things!" screamed Rogerson as he picked up the warm, limp body of the girl in his arms.

GORDON LAMONT.



# THE IRON BAND





## THE IRON BAND



AS HE stepped out through the huge entrance of the Leipzig station, Carleton started with surprise and delight. At home they had told him about the passing of the old romantic beauty in German towns; they had shaken their heads regretfully and sighed at thought of the days when industrial development had not marred with soot and uproar the glamour and the charm. And his impressions of Antwerp and of Elberfeld—gained, it was true, only through leaden sheets of rain—had seemed to confirm such presagings. But these surroundings, though the mediaeval atmosphere was indeed lacking, had a quaint charm all their own. The sun had set, but the western sky was still aglow, and a low-lying cloud-bank gleamed blood-red. Straight before him stretched a long, broad avenue of linden-trees, just touched with the tender green of early spring; to the left of it he could see swans floating on a lake



in a tiny park; and on the right, a great open square, dotted with flower-beds, and peopled with promenaders—officers in blue and gray uniforms, soberly-clad citizens, white-aproned nurse-girls, groups of students with breast-ribbons and red and black caps. There was a hum of many voices in the air, and an indefinable spring fragrance and freshness. Every now and then an electric car would pass almost silently, sometimes with the sound of a warning bell that rang like a chime.

Delighted with it all, Carleton put his bags into a victoria, told the driver, "Hotel Kaiserhof," climbed in, and was whirled away.

He had intended to call on Löwe the next morning; but, wearied with his all-day journey, he slept until nearly noon. When he woke, the sunlight was streaming in dusty golden rays into the great bare room. A glance at his watch startled him at the lateness of the hour; it seemed almost a sin to lie there senseless while outside the world was rushing on in new and fascinating forms. He had seen a great deal and done a great deal in the course of his twenty-four years, but he had never lost that fresh enthusiasm for the unknown and untried which is the real and only guaranty of youth.

He breakfasted alone in the gilded dining-room downstairs. Its heavy velvet curtains and thick carpet oppressed him, for through the windows he could see the blue and gold April day outside, and he was anxious to step out and share it. Löwe lived, he had been told, on the other side of the Ring; so he took a cab again, though he would have preferred to walk. In the air was a fragrance as of violets and damp green leaves; there had been a storm in the night, and all the streets were wet. But overhead the sky was cloudless; and after the misty crossing and the days and days of rain, the sunshine seemed Italian in its warmth and brightness. The sidewalks were crowded now; over the uneven pavements carriages were clattering; once a long wagon full of korps-students bound for their duelling-place swept by. There was a great keg of beer on the seat near the driver, and one of the young fellows was crouched beside it, filling the steins which his companions were busily emptying. They looked at Carleton as he drove past, and laughed, and Carleton laughed back, happily. As they rounded a corner, the strains of *O Alle Burschenherrlichkeit* floated back to him, reminiscent of his own college days, and he caught

himself humming the tune, the smile still on his lips.

His interview with Löwe was soon over. A huge, iron-grey beard, aquiline features, eyes like molten steel—that was Carleton's first impression of the man as he grasped his hand. He was tall—as tall as Carleton himself; and from him emanated a curious impression of masterful strength; one felt it in his glance, in his tone, in the touch of his fingers.

“ I am a very busy man, Mr. Carleton,” he said, “ but I am never too busy to encourage and assist the player with real genius. And indeed, without it he would waste his time in coming to me. I tell him so. There are a hundred teachers to care for the merely talented. Play for me now a little something!”

Carleton stood thoughtful a moment; then, bow in hand, he raised his violin against his cheek and drew from it the first low note of the *Minuet in G*.

“ Enough! ” said Löwe when he had finished. “ I will take you, my young friend, for I think there are possibilities in that hand of yours. You will perhaps excuse me now? As I told you, I am very busy. Perhaps to-morrow at

four? Yes? *Auf Wiedersehen*, then, Mr. Carleton. I shall expect you."

Carleton drove back to the hotel with his head in the clouds.

His lessons began the next day. He had two a week; and, as he was an advanced pupil, he took them at Löwe's home. One day, as he was about to leave, he met in the hallway a lady who he guessed at once must be Löwe's young wife. Already he had heard her mentioned by those of his fellow-pupils whom he knew—had heard of her beauty, her youth, her husband's infatuation for her; had heard discussed her reasons for marriage to a man like Löwe, old enough to be her father. So he looked at her now with an interest naturally keen, as he bowed and stepped aside for her to pass. Then Löwe's deep voice sounded behind him:

"Mr. Carleton, I wish you to meet my wife!"

Carleton faced her quickly. She smiled very graciously, and extended her hand.

"You must pardon me, Mr. Carleton," she said in German, "Unfortunately I speak no English. But you yourself understand German, I believe? And if you only speak very slowly, I can understand English."

Her smile was really bewitching, Carleton thought, as he looked at her, and her voice exactly what it should have been—low and very sweet. She went on:

“ My husband has told me a great deal about you. He is most optimistic about your progress—”

“ I’m afraid,” deprecated Carleton, “ I’m really a very poor pupil. It’s rather distracting, you know, to accustom one’s self to new surroundings suddenly.”

“ Don’t flatter him, Rita,” said Löwe, jokingly. Carleton glanced at him as he spoke, and it seemed to him clear—despite the smile—that the man was utterly infatuated with his wife. Small wonder, he decided, as he turned to her again; she was lithe and slender, with features so perfect in their classic regularity that they would have been cold had not her soft eyes, and her mouth—vivid scarlet in the pallor of her face—redeemed them. Her hair she wore low about her neck under a tilted hat; round her white throat gleamed a string of golden beads, lending the pale flesh a warmer tone.

“ You are alone in Leipzig, Mr. Carleton? ”

“ Unfortunately, yes,” he smiled.

“We should both be delighted if you would dine quite informally with us some evening—”

“I should be only too delighted—” he interrupted, perhaps a shade too fervently; but Löwe from the background rumbled out a seconding of the invitation; he thanked them both again, and took his leave.

The meal at which he was the guest of honor was followed by others on which there is no need to dwell. Löwe, as he had said, was a very busy man; and it seemed quite natural that Carleton should undertake to teach his wife English. Rita's existence was at best rather lonely; she was a Dresdener by birth, and knew few people in Leipzig intimately. Carleton seemed to fill a gap in her existence of which before she had been only dimly conscious, but of which now, when days passed without their meeting, she was painfully aware. As for him, he did not even try to deny to himself that he was in love with her; she was so small, so young, so lovely, so appealing, that it required all the effort of his will to keep him, in moments when they were alone together, from catching her in his arms and pouring out the whole story.

One night he telephoned her to ask if he might call. She hesitated, then she said:

“Fritz is in Berlin, at a meeting of his old classmates. But if you really want to come—”

“*Do* let me!” he begged, and waited, hardly daring to hope.

A silence; then,

“At half-past eight, then?”—this very hastily; and in the middle of his cry of assent, he heard the receiver clicked up.

He was standing at her door as the city clocks chimed the half-hour; and never, it seemed to him, had he felt so strangely excited—like a child at his first party, he thought, half-laughing. Impatiently he waited in the drawing-room till he heard a rustle at the door; as she entered, he was on his feet. She was dressed in old rose and silver, her neck and shoulders bare; in her dark hair a silver fillet gleamed.

She shook a reproving finger at him as she saw him:

“Don’t you know, naughty one, that you mustn’t come to see me when Fritz is out of town?”

He was holding both her hands, and suddenly, daring greatly, he raised them to his lips and kissed one pink palm after the other.



“ Did you think I could stay away? ” he whispered.

She started at the action and the words, and he let her go, but she could not hide the sudden flush that stained her cheeks.

“ Fritz,” she said in German, with an assumption of lightness, “ wished to have you informed that he should be unable to see you to-morrow because of his absence; so I thought if I let you come to-night, I could make sure that you got the message.”

She sank into a great plush arm-chair before the fire, and smiled up at him.

“ Do you mind my telling you how enchanting you look? ” he asked, bending near. His arms were crossed on the back of the chair above and behind her, and she had to turn to look at him.

Silence; then very low she answered:

“ Mind? Ah, Herr Carleton, if you knew how lonely and wretched I am sometimes, you would see that I cannot mind.”

“ You mean—? ” he questioned, softly.

“ Do you ever feel that no matter how well they may understand you, no one can ever come close to the real you? Oh, life *is* so dreary sometimes! ”

There was a hint of tears in her voice; a fierce tenderness swelled in him, a longing to shield and protect her. But all he said was:

“But surely, Fritz—?”

“Fritz! Fritz! Fritz!” she burst out. “Often I feel I hate the name! He loves me—yes; but how? He is a slave-driver, not a lover! He—*Herrgott!* What have I told you!”

The slender white shoulders bowed suddenly; the dark head sank to the broad chair-arm. All her slim body shook with sobs. Carleton had a feeling of being tossed in a raging sea by giant waves; then he found himself on his knees beside her, one arm about her, his lips at her ear.

“Dearest! dearest!” he was murmuring, over and over again. “Dearest! *My* dearest! Look at me—only look at me!”

Neither of them knew how it happened; but she stirred in his clasp and raised a pale wet face to his; the next instant her tears were sweet on his lips.

Then, with a shudder, revulsion seized her, and she tore herself away, panting.

“Am I mad?” he heard her whisper, her dark eyes wild.

“No, sweetheart—listen!” he answered quickly. “I can’t hide it any longer—you

must know it's *I* who am mad—over you! The moment I saw you I loved you—Oh, I know how trite it sounds, and what you're going to say; that I haven't any right to tell you this. Don't you think I know it? Don't you think the thought has stung me during all these weeks of concealment—to think I couldn't even tell you I thought of nothing but you? Do you think it's anything but torture and agony for me to picture you in *his* arms, answering *his* caresses, to realise that *he* can take without asking what I would give my soul for? Rights! Rights! He has a right to you, body and soul, because he met you first; I oughtn't even to touch your cheek! But I had to tell. . . . Now that you know, send me away if you want to. I'll go!"

He stopped. The fire crackled in the silence. Then she said, slowly, almost inaudibly:

"*Really*—you love me?"

"*Can* you ask it?" and his arms went out to her again.

She turned, hesitated, and then suddenly her bare arms slid about his neck and she clung to him.

"Then—Oh, Carlo, hold me—kiss me—love me forever—for oh! dear God! how I love you!"

He left her two hours later, and walked home through a dream-world. Next morning he could hardly credit his own memory, so impossible did it all appear. Thought of work was forgotten; after a late breakfast he went out for a stroll, hoping out of the maze of new thoughts and emotions to reach some definite conclusion. It was a grey day, with a promise of rain in the air; the rumble of carriages sounded hollow on the pavements; the leaves hung lifeless on the trees. He went slowly down the Ring and crossed to the Café Merkur, at this time almost empty. Seated alone inside, he ordered some coffee and tried to think.

He felt like a wild thing caught in a goading, maddening snare, from which there was no escape. Struggle as he would, he could not force himself even to contemplate playing false to that unspoken agreement which had existed—as it always exists—from the moment when Löwe had said, “Mr. Carleton, my wife!” Yet it was just as impossible to go back to their old footing as to remain exactly where they now stood; a man’s arms about a woman point a path which leads in just one direction. As he pondered came the solution: Divorce! Was it a horribly selfish thought? She would be risk-

ing everything for him; true; but was not a risk worth taking for everything in life worth having? She would leave loneliness, solitude, days of weariness and nights of anguish behind her; she would find with him peace, understanding, joy.

Löwe was to return the next day. Carleton telephoned Rita in the afternoon; her voice sounded strained and unnatural, he thought. She laughed once or twice, mirthlessly. Yes, he could come again that evening.

Eight o'clock found him in the drawing-room, his mind made up. She was too keenly, too vividly alive, he told himself, to drag out longer such an existence as that of the past.

As she entered, he sprang toward her, but she put up one hand warningly.

"You mustn't!" she said quickly. "Sit down here by the fire and we can talk."

Surprised, he obeyed her. She seated herself in the great arm-chair opposite, facing him bravely. A moment he looked at her—at the curve of her arm as it lay along the chair, at the tender modelling of her white neck and shoulder, at the pallor of her face and at the dark mystery of her hair—and something caught

curiously at his heart. Before he realised it, he was bending over her.

She rose quickly, as if she had expected this, and a look almost of terror came into her eyes. "Ah, Carlo!" she begged, "do please mind me this once; sit down there and remember: you mustn't come near me!"

"Sweetheart," he stammered, astounded, "Don't you *want* me to touch you?"

She shook her head, slowly. "You mustn't."

"Why, dear? It isn't that you don't really care for me?"

Again she shook her head. "No, not that, but—oh, my dear, *what* are you and I to do? I feel as though I were in some horrible network that bound me hand and foot. And just out of reach is happiness—ah, *why* can't we reach it?"

"Break the meshes!" he said, half-aloud. "Life is too short at best to waste a moment of sweetness. Break the meshes, sweetheart: we can leave Fritz behind, and step clear of every bar."

"You mean?" she questioned, wide-eyed.

"Only a legal separation, dear—that isn't such a terrible thing, is it? And think of what it means to us!"

She tried to speak, but her eyes brimmed

suddenly over; she sank back into the chair and hid her face; a storm of weeping swept her, and when his arms enclosed her, she did not shake them off.

“ Ah, Carlo! Carlo! If it only *could* be! ”

“ It can, sweetest of women,” he urged. “ It can be—it must be! ”

“ It can’t! It can’t! If you only knew! Oh, Carlo! Carlo! ”

The tears choked her. Carleton held her silently, stroking her hair, waiting for the storm to pass. As she grew quieter he spoke:

“ Sure you don’t want to be alone, dear? ”

“ Oh, no—no! Don’t leave me! It’s only— ”

“ There, sweetheart. Don’t try to tell me if it pains you. ”

“ Ah, but I must—I must! Carlo—I—Fritz—I can’t go with you, because of my child! ”

A cold hand clutched suddenly at Carleton’s heart. A moment he sat stupidly, not comprehending; then a cruel light broke upon him.

“ Rita dear—you mean— ”

The sobs had stopped now; she was very still. He could hardly hear her voice.

“ I mean—I am going to have a baby. ” The words came slowly, painfully. Her voice was



strained and hoarse, and her hands were clenching and twisting in her lap.

Then over the man swept a flood of blind, unreasoning, demoniac rage. Löwe—damn him!—had wrecked her life. Oh—if he could only sink his fingers into that thick throat, hammer the heavy head against some wall of steel till the metal should ring with the blows, batter the life madly out of the unwieldy body! His hands closed convulsively upon the padded chair-arm. He was shaking all over.

The fit passed. The girl looked up at him with questioning, tormented eyes.

“Don’t you see, Carlo?” she asked. “Don’t you see how impossible it is for me to go with you—even if you wanted me now?” Her voice broke, pitifully.

He caught her to him in fierce protest. “*Want* you? Of course I want you just the same!”

“No, Carlo, it wouldn’t be the same. You know it—or you will know it when you can think clearly. But what makes it impossible is that—my baby mustn’t ever think of his mother what they would say of me if I should go to you. For you don’t know Fritz—he would be a madman, and everyone would

learn everything. O—*think*, Carlo! Think for yourself what it would be like! We can't do it! We can't! I ought to have told you last night—I was mad or dreaming; but I see it now. Carlo—try and make it a little easier for me!”

“But Rita!” he burst out, “do you think I'm going to say good-bye to you just because of this—to walk out of this room forever? I realise that concealment won't do any longer, but you can come away with me at least—”

“But that's just what I'm telling you is impossible, my dear,” she interrupted. “Think again! I'm a woman, Carlo, and in a case like this it's always the woman who sees clearest! Even if I should go with you, how could we manage it? You've barely money enough to support yourself, and it would mean a break with every friend you have.”

“We could manage somehow,” he protested. “Rita darling—things like that don't really matter! I love you—I want you! You know you love me. That's the one big fact—the others don't count. There *must* be some way—”

“There isn't, Carlo,” she broke in with forced calmness. “Not a way in the world. I've

thought it all out, again and again, since last night, and there's no escape. You simply must leave the city at once and—and for good."

"Rita, I won't! And that's flat!" he declared. "Leave you behind to loneliness and pain while I go out into the world again to try and forget! In heaven's name, why? The other way may have difficulties, but this is a thousand times worse."

"Oh, my dear," she told him, "won't you even *try* to see? Don't let love blind your eyes! This way is hard for us both, God knows"—her low voice shook a little—"but the other way means one brief taste of heaven and endless years of hell. No—listen!"—as he tried to interrupt. "We're simply arguing in a circle. There's every law of man and God to keep me here, and only utter selfishness to urge my going. Don't misunderstand me, dear"—quickly, as she saw the hurt look in his eyes—"I'm not talking about you; I mean my own selfishness in putting myself before my child and my husband."

"Dearest," he said, as one fighting for his very life, "you're the last person on earth anyone could call selfish. *Is* it selfishness to

listen to the calling of your heart? Isn't it rather the most perfect obedience? "

" Carlo," she whispered, a faint smile on her lips, " yours is the voice of the tempter. My resolve is unwavering."

And then suddenly the smile vanished and the tears came. She hid her face against his breast, and her arms tightened convulsively about his neck. And somehow, in the midst of that storm of weeping, there came to the man a realisation of the heights of self-sacrifice to which she had attained, and of the depths of her passion and pain. He knew in his soul that she was right; and for the first time in his life he tried to stifle the promptings of his own heart, that he might be not more lacking in nobility than she.

She rose suddenly to her feet. " And so," she said, carefully, as one phrasing a set little speech, " this is good-bye."

Her eyes were bright with tears, her lips aquiver, but she put out one white hand bravely.

" Rita! "

The next instant she was close against his heart again, his arms about her, and his lips on hers. For one wild, sweet moment it seemed that nothing mattered after all; passion-shaken,

he breathed the fragrance of her hair, kissed her eyes, her mouth, as she clung to him.

“Forever—oh, my soul!” she whispered, and strained him to her breast.

Then, panting, she struggled back and away from him.

“Leave me, Carlo! Oh, you must!”

He could not trust himself to speak. Then she said:

“Fritz is coming home to-morrow. Write him a letter—anything—explaining why you have left. You *know* it must be *Adieu*—not—not *auf Wiedersehen*.”

Her low voice trembled. His gaze followed longingly as she stepped back into the shadow of the room, and his whole soul was aching to kiss away the tears that he knew were gleaming in her eyes. Then somehow he swung the heavy door shut behind him, and went stumbling down the winding stairs.

ALBERT F. LEFFINGWELL.

# A YOUNG MAN IN WRONG







## A YOUNG MAN IN WRONG

“ACK, please—please—not so fast. Please!”

She seized his arm frantically.

“Brhh. . . .” That was all that was audible from the man at the wheel. His eye was on the road ahead, and he sat hunched up, in the most approved motoring fashion.

“Please—please! I’m so frightened!”

“Got to. . . .” He said something else, but it was lost in the roar of the motor and the whistle of the wind.

The girl turned and looked back down the dusty road. Barely, through the clouds behind them, she saw a machine rounding the corner, but it was the one they had just passed, not the one she was looking for.

The man at the wheel whirled the car fiercely round a corner, and the girl, in her awkward position, almost fell out. She screamed, and called out hysterically,

“Not so fast! *Please!*”

Jack only shook his head. An unfortunate chicken changed from squawkiness to nothingness under their flying wheels—but there was no time to lament him. A dog challenged a race, but was behind before he had started. There was a glimpse of two startled country faces, that amused the girl so that she forgot the speed long enough to turn and look at them—but they were far in the distance.

The girl started to speak again, but the raucous horn drowned her voice, and when that had stopped they were storming up a hill with racketing cut-out. She tried seizing his arm again, but he glared so fiercely at her, and the car swerved so terribly, that she drew back frightened. Desperation seized her.

“ If you don’t slow up, I’ll . . . ”

He did not hear her. With sudden motion she bent over the dash-board, hand on the battery switch. He saw her action and bent to stop her. Their hands met on the little knob, wrestling for it. He almost had it, when the car swerved. He sat up suddenly with a wrench at the wheel that just saved them. She sat up, too, with a large part of the switch in her hand, and a larger consciousness of having done more than she intended.

The engine stopped short, there was a screeching of brakes, and the car drew up in a cloud of dust

Evelyn looked at Jack, guiltily. His face was firm—and fiery. She waited for him to say something. He refused, and grew firmer in aspect every moment. Something had to be said. She ventured:

“ Oh.”

“ Damn! ” He looked many of them.

“ Please don’t. I know that—it’s—Please.”

She was confused. He was furious—and articulate at last.

“ Now damn it all, Evvy—.”

“ Don’t call me Evvy, in the same moment that you call me damn—that is—don’t—Oh, you know what I mean.”

“ No, I don’t, and confound it all, I don’t care what you don’t like to be called; it’s a Hell of a note.”

“ Jack! ”

“ Well, if you don’t like it, explain why you—well, you see what you’ve done. Give me back what was the switch—What the devil? ”

Evelyn was standing up leisurely in the car, wrapping the veil round her hat. She looked at the irate man a moment without answering,

then drawing up her skirts a trifle, stepped out of the car, and started across the road, head in air. Jack watched her in blank amazement.

“ I say,” he finally managed to gasp, “ what are you up to, and where are you going? ”

No answer. Head higher in the air.

“ For Lord’s sake, girl, what’s the matter? ”

With very conscious indifference, she wiped an imaginary speck off her glove with a handkerchief.

Jack Harris looked round for something to hit. He happened on the Klaxon. It gave a ghastly shriek. Evelyn started at the sound, and, not looking where she was going, stumbled into a ditch. Jack sprang hastily from the seat, caught his foot in a tire-case, fell flat in the dust—and was at her side in a minute.

“ Are you hurt? ”

She rose to her feet, scorning his assistance, flapped a little dust off the immaculate skirt, confined a loose lock of hair, and answered carelessly:

“ Yes.”

“ For God’s sake, where? ”

He looked at her feverishly, up and down, as if expecting to see a stray rib peeking out of

her collar, or a loose artery dangling on the ground. She smiled a trifle.

“Not that way.”

“Internally?”

“Yes,—mentally. I am wounded, disappointed in you, Mr. Harris.”

“Mr. Harris! For Heaven’s sake, Evvy! What is the matter? Just because I damned a little? Everybody does that, and it helps—a lot. I was going to teach you after we got—you know what. It’ll help *you*—some day.”

“Mr. Harris! If you please, don’t add vulgarity to your other offences.”

“Other offences? Well, I give up!” He made expressive gestures. “Please explain to me, in words of one syllable, what the trouble is and why you’re wandering round the middle of the road making your toilette. Aren’t we eloping? Anybody coming along the road would think we were already married.”

She smiled a trifle; then, musingly:

“I wish Father would come. He ought to have caught us by this time.”

“Father!”

“Yes.” She looked down the road, but no one was in sight, and she shook her head.

Jack seemed struck with an idea.

“What do you mean? Any way, he might be. Let’s see what I can do with the switch you did your best to bug.”

He started for the car. She caught his arm.

“Wait a minute.”

“But if somebody should come.”

“Wait a minute.”

“But—.”

“Wait.”

Her voice was so imperative that he stopped.

“Sit down here a moment beside me. I want to say something. They won’t catch us. There, beside me.”

He sat down next to her—on a comfortable-looking stone. In a moment, cautiously, he put an arm round her. She smiled, sadly.

“All right, if it gives you any pleasure. It doesn’t hurt me.”

The arm was withdrawn in a flash. There was a moment of silence. Jack was glumly resolved not to say a word, and she seemed to be planning her speech carefully. Finally she spoke.

“Well, Jack, I don’t quite know how to say it.”

“If I had any idea in the world what you wanted to say, I might be able to help you.”

“ Please don’t be nasty. The situation, you see, appears to be that we’ve made a mistake. Now haven’t we? ”

A grunt from the figure on the next stone.

“ Very well then—but we have.” She waited for him to say something, but he refused. Finally shrugging her shoulders a trifle, she went on, “ Here’s the situation: I liked you, and—this is no time for modesty—you were crazy to marry me.”

“ I should be, I guess.”

“ Passed by, completely. You, I say, were crazy to marry me. I thought we’d better not. You pressed me; I was wise, and refused. Isn’t that so? ”

“ Yes, at intervals,”

“ Right. Then, one day I was feeling—Oh, I don’t know exactly how to explain that feeling, but you understand? ”

“ Oh, yes, my dear, I comprehend you completely.”

“ Thank you. In a moment of rashness I gave in. You’ll admit it was unexpected? ”

“ Very.”

“ I gave in and consented to this elopement.”

“ No! I can’t stand that ‘ consented.’ As if I forced you to it! When you once made up



your mind—Heaven only knows why you did it so suddenly—then you forced me to it. And of all the ridiculous things! To elope on a ladder in broad daylight in the streets of Brookline!”

“It was necessary.”

“Necessary! Bah! All you had to do was to walk out with your suit-case and meet me round the corner. Instead, you climb out of a window, almost break your neck, shin along the garage roof, and slide down a ladder, almost killing both of us. You realise that your smaller suit-case hit me square on the nose?”

“Oh, yes. That was funny!”

“Funny! Go on, I’m calm.”

“Very well. You force me to elope, pack me and my suit-cases into your miserable little machine, without any maid—and drive off!”

“Imagine how a maid would have looked straddling the hood!”

“Don’t be absurd. This whole business is too absurd. You drive me off, without a maid, only two suit-cases and a hat-box, rush recklessly through the main street of Brookline, where anybody might see us, won’t stop at the corner to let me say good-bye to Mary—and then drive so fast that it frightens me to

death. Now what have you got to say for yourself? ”

“ Nothing, but that it’s all absolute nonsense.”

“ Nonsense? I ask you to go slower. You refuse. Our temperaments don’t agree. You go faster. I scream. You laugh. What have you to say for yourself? ”

She tossed her head in a way implying that she had settled the matter for good. Jack was silent for a moment, his face working strangely; then suddenly he burst into roars of laughter. Evelyn looked at him exasperatedly.

“ Are you laughing at me, sir? ”

He shook his head feebly, too convulsed to speak.

“ What are you laughing at then? ”

“ At—at—at—.”

“ Don’t laugh in my face. What are you laughing at? ”

“ M—m—me! ”

“ M—m—m—me? ” she sputtered.

“ Don’t imitate me,” he shook his head feebly; “ I can’t stand it. If you like it any better, I am laughing at I. ”

Evelyn stamped her foot furiously—then made a violent change of tactics, and burst into

tears. The effect was instantaneous. Jack had almost got control of himself. Now he burst into fresh convulsions. It took her completely aback. She forgot to cry, half choked, made a funny little sputter, and then,

“What do you mean? Is it so funny to see me reduced to tears?”

“Reduced?—Oh, that’s good—yes, awfully funny.”

“Oh!” The little word meant a lot—but Jack was proof.

“I’m sorry, but I can’t help it. It’s simply Hell to have a sense of humor. I know you don’t like the colloquialism, but it does so well. Don’t you think it is?”

“No. I wouldn’t agree with you for anything! What are you laughing at?”

“Oh, it’s so funny, because—.”

“Well?”

“Because this is—.”

“Go on. I know it’s profane, but go on.”

“It’s so funny because this is an elopement!”

“Not so funny for me. Whose elopement is it, mine or yours?”

“Ah . . .”

Jack collapsed on the ground, and rolled in laughter. The ground about him was shaken

with the violence of his mirth, and his kicks sent stones and twigs flying in every direction.

Evelyn, figuratively, rushed round in circles. Actually she performed a series of small actions, to no obvious purpose, and to no visible result. She started to approach Jack, then dodged back to escape his left foot. She started to hail a passing machine, went so far as to wave imperatively, then changed her mind and frowned so coldly when it stopped, that the occupants went on again, firmly decided that the resolute young woman and the prostrate young man were a pair of lunatics, pathetic, but safer let alone. A rustic gentleman with a pail lingered near, and seemed sympathetically interested in the young pair—though more in the stranded machine—and she almost told him her troubles, but pride intervened. With a sort of gasp, peculiar to incensed ladies, she sat down, too angry to laugh, and too excited to cry.

There was silence. The rustic had disappeared with his pail. Several machines had gone by displaying interest or amusement signals. Children from a farmhouse near by had reconnoitred and run away. It was high time for something to be done.

Jack decided that he was the man to do it.

Without a word he got up and went to the machine. In a business-like manner he produced tools from the box on the running-board, and shortly was heard repairing and cursing.

Evelyn watched with interest. Presently:

“ Jack.”

No response. Again:

“ Jack.”

“ Well? ” He was very curt.

“ What are you doing? ”

“ Doing? Oh, I’m—There’s no time for that. I’m doing my best to fix the machine you did your best to ruin.”

“ I did not. And when you get it fixed? ”

“ We’re going to get in and ride to Newburyport and get married.”

“ Indeed.” Very simple and expressive.

“ Yes.”

He seemed to take it very much for granted, and went on wrestling with the mysterious contrivance on the dash. Evelyn considered, looking carefully down the road. No one was in sight.

“ For Heaven’s sake, what can be the matter with them? Why don’t they come? ” she murmured to herself. Then, with a last glance down the road, and a discontented shrug of her

shoulders, she turned and walked up to the machine.

“ Jack? ”

“ Yes. Pretty nearly ready. Just a minute.”

“ No. I have something to say.” She waited a moment. He went on working. “ Listen! Aside from the impropriety of your language, which we won’t discuss now, I should like to observe that we aren’t going to Newburyport—and,” with great emphasis, “ that we aren’t going to be married.”

“ Indeed? ” He started whistling.

“ Stop whistling! Yes, for two reasons.”

She waited. He went on working. She spoke again, impatiently.

“ Do you care to hear them? ”

“ Not passionately, but go ahead.”

“ Very well. First because before your miserable machine is ready, Father will be here and we shall be hauled back by the scruff of the neck.”

Jack stopped working at last, and tried to inspect the scruff of his neck. After twisting his head cautiously in all directions, he smiled urbanely, and said:

“ Don’t think mine offers much hold. Let’s see yours.”

“ Stop! Don’t be silly!—And, secondly, because I don’t want to go to Newburyport and I don’t want to marry you.”

He lit a cigarette very viciously, and faced her.

“ Now look here, Evvy, let’s end this foolishness. As for your father’s catching us—he probably doesn’t know yet that we have eloped, and if he does, he hasn’t the faintest idea where we’ve gone. If he’s doing anything at all, it’s probably driving the ancient Mercedes as fast as it can go, which isn’t very much, off towards Worcester, because he thinks we’ll go to the preacher I know out there.”

“ He’s not doing anything of the sort. He’s probably after us this very minute.”

“ How can he be? ”

“ Well I told him we were going in this direction.”

“ Told him! ”

“ Yes, in the note I left.”

“ The note you left! For the—So you left a note? ”

“ I couldn’t deceive him. He’s my father.”

“ So you told him! Oh! Well, perhaps it’s a noble sentiment. But he isn’t here and I’ve got the car fixed. Let’s be off. He couldn’t



catch us in his old bus, if he were coming over the hill now. And of course this business of not going to marry me is all tommy rot."

"Nothing of the kind." She was defiant, emphasising with a sharp gesture. Jack was exasperated.

"Now come. No more of this foolishness. I don't know what you are up to, but now isn't the time for it. Hop in."

"I won't."

"Do you expect to live, grow old, and pass away peacefully here? What did you come for? "

"I don't know." Implying that the question was impertinent.

"For the ride, I dare say."

"If you insist on being nasty, yes. For the ride, by all means."

Jack threw his hands into the air, whistled a snatch of a tune, tripped a few violent jig steps—and started laughing again.

"I'm very sorry, my dear, to have to laugh so much. I know you dislike it, but what can one do? This little situation is so tragic from an insider's point of view and so comical from an outsider's, that as a wise man, I am forced to adopt the point of view—say—of that lugu-

brious rustic in the distance and laugh. He'd laugh if he had a sense of humor. You admit that the situation is highly comical? "

" Not at all."

" Highly."

" Very well."

" Thank you. Might I ask what it is due to? Are you suffering from mid-Victorian maidenly coyness? Do you want me to snatch you up in my arms, cover your face with rough kisses, and bear you away screaming, nolens volens, and all that sort of thing? "

" No! "

" All right, though I may be reduced to it later. Then are you quite crazy? "

" No! "

" That's encouraging too. Am I quite crazy? "

" Well—."

" Out with it."

" I don't think you are." She smiled a trifle.

" Better and better. We're neither of us crazy, and you're not feeling mid-Victorian to-day. Perhaps you think it bourgeois to elope on a Wednesday? "

" Silly! Will you never understand! Here's

the point. You begged me to elope, forced me to."

"No! You proposed it yourself."

"It was your idea. In a weak moment I give in. We start. You show yourself in your true colors. I discover the mistake I have made. I stop the car, I hate you, and I am going home. Very simple, and quite to the point. Do you understand?"

"Is this serious?"

"Perfectly."

"You've thought it over?"

"Quite."

"Then—"

"Yes?"

"Very well."

Jack bowed formally, made a feeble effort to shrug his shoulders, and turned toward the car.

"I see. Then there is nothing to do but get into the car and go back—if you will condescend to go with me. People will probably think that we have just been out for a little ride, and the suit-cases and hat-boxes are—filled with gasoline. But, of course, you left a note—"

"Yes, I had to." She was looking anxiously down the road. "What can be the matter? Oh, why don't they come?"

Jack looked surprised. "You seem to be rather looking forward to their coming."

"Of course— No! I mean, I— Look, look! Is that it?"

She pointed frantically to a big car that had just come in sight round the corner, and was plunging toward them with immense sound and fury. Jack scanned it, smiling.

"I should suspect it was. This promises to be very merry!"

The car slowed up as it approached. A heavy, begoggled man was leaning out over the side, peering closely at them. For a moment he was doubtful, then recognised them, and spoke a hasty word to the driver. The roar of the engine stopped, heavy tires groaned on the gravel, and amid a cloud of gravel and dust the big car drew up a few feet beyond the elopers.

A dramatic pause ensued. Jack stood silent, trying to look careless and unconcerned. Evelyn seemed to be thinking. And the heavy man in the car, without a word, took off his goggles, wiped them methodically, put them in his pocket, and leisurely stepped out. No sooner had his feet touched the ground than Evelyn finished thinking and came very actively to life.

"Jack," she screamed, "Jack!" and then rushed for the surprised young man and threw both arms around his neck.

"Jack, Jack," she screamed again, "don't let me go. Please. Protect me. Oh, Jack!"

"For goodness sake, Evvy," he started, completely taken aback. Then, with the natural instinct of the male who has a female in his arms, he squeezed her tight, and started uttering incoherent soothing words.

"There, there, my dear. It's all right. There, there."

But the *semper mutabile* Evelyn was not so easily soothed. Her excitement and affection seemed to increase every moment and she continued to throb and scream violently, exclaiming at intervals:

"Oh, oh, don't let me go, Jack! I will not leave you. Not for anything. We will never be separated. Never. Never!"

And she got closer and closer, and Jack more and more soothing.

Longdon, *père*, meanwhile, had been watching without a word. Finally, when Evelyn's affection had become inarticulate, he spoke.

"Well, Curtis,"—to the muffled and goggled

driver at his side—"this is a very delightful domestic scene now, isn't it? "

Curtis answered only with a nod, but the mention of his name had an almost electrical effect on Evelyn.

"So it's you, Curtis Boyden," she cried, loosing herself from Jack, "hiding there! I should think that you might, coming along like this to spy on us. Father, why did you bring that man with you? "

"Why, my dear—"

"I hate him. Make him go away. I won't say another word till he goes. And I love Jack. You shall never separate us. Yes, I hate him."

Young Boyden had meantime taken off his goggles.

"I am very sorry, Miss Longdon, and Mr.—Harris," he began courteously. "I realise that my position is—unfortunate; but your father's driver had disappeared, and couldn't be found anywhere. I happened to be near, and he asked me to drive the machine. That explains my presence. Believe me,—"

"I don't. Not a word!" Evelyn broke in angrily; "I believe you came along just to put us to shame."

"Evelyn." Mr. Longdon was reproving,

but still smiling. "You are doing him an injustice. I don't know what can have happened to our man, but he couldn't be found high or low, and Curtis was in the house, and I asked him to drive for us. Don't be unfair to him."

"I won't. I hate him. And I love Jack. I never will leave him."

She put her arms round Jack again, and fairly glowered at poor Boyden. Mr. Longdon broke into a laugh.

"This is most amusing, my dear—and I assure you, quite touching, too. I hadn't given you credit for such depth of feeling. It's very commendable in such a young girl. But now, since I have been fortunate enough to be able to stop this business, let's get into the machine and go along home."

"I'll do nothing of the sort."

"Oh, I guess you will, when you think it over."

"I won't."

"Evvy!"

"All right—but I won't go home. If I go anywhere it's to Aunt Agatha's. I won't go home and face Mother and everybody, and be laughed at."



Mr. Longdon thought a moment.

"Well, I don't know as there is any harm in that. But I haven't time to drive over to your aunt's. It's miles out of my way."

"Let Jack take me."

"Trust you and Jack! Well, if you both give me your word."

Evelyn seemed staggered at something. "Eh—" she hesitated; "I didn't think you'd—No," brightening up again. "I refuse to do anything like that. It's—it's—not fair to Jack."

Mr. Longdon puckered his brows and shrugged his shoulders.

"The only other thing to do is to ride over with Curtis and let Jack and me ride home together."

Evelyn started in apparent anger; then, thinking better of it, she smiled.

"Very well," resolutely, "and I'll tell him what I think of him all the way."

Mr. Longdon laughed. "You'll have to be a man, Curtis. What the—?"

Evelyn was rapidly trying to unfasten the bags and boxes on Jack's car.

"I am just going to take some of my clothes to my aunt's," she declared. "No, don't try

to stop me. I insist. I want—to show them to her. She will sympathise.”

Mr. Longdon chuckled. “Not if I know your aunt. But go ahead, and be quick. Help her, Curtis.”

In Curtis’s quick hands the work lasted but a moment, and the boxes were put on the second machine. Evelyn looked on haughtily.

“There. Thank you. You have done so much for me to-day. And now if you will take me to my aunt’s and not say a word all the way, I shall be very grateful.”

Her tone was sarcastic, the look in her eyes biting, but Curtis was discreet and silent. Shrugging his shoulders slightly, and allowing himself the faintest suggestion of a smile, he gave his hand to Evelyn and helped her into the car. The engine hummed, the gears clanged faintly, and in a minute they were disappearing down the road.

Mr. Longdon and Jack Harris watched them as they vanished into the distance, each waiting for the other to speak. Neither did for a while; then Mr. Longdon broke the silence.

“Well, Mr. Harris, it seems that we are to ride back together.”

“Yes.”

“ In that case—why not start? ”

“ Very well.”

“ And please don’t be so offended. You know I couldn’t quite stand for your running away with my daughter like that. It was quite out of the question. You admit that?”

“ I can’t honestly.”

“ I was afraid so, but it is. I’ll explain the whole thing to you later, and I think you’ll understand my point of view. But believe that I have no grudge against you.”

“ Thank you.”

Jack’s tone was cold and unyielding. The older man pursed his brows a trifle.

“ I think you’re a trifle more difficult than necessary,” he remarked. “ I mean what I say. You think the girl really loves you? ”

Jack hesitated.

“ Ah— ” he started slowly, then brightened up. “ You noticed her when you came up. I thought that spoke for itself.”

“ Oh, yes. Quite touching, to be sure. Well, we’ll talk it over some more. How about starting? ”

“ Very well, sir.”

Jack turned the car round and they were on their way home. Mr. Longdon tried several

times to start a conversation, but young Harris made little return. He was obviously thinking, deep and hard. But finally he did speak.

“ Mr. Longdon.”

“ Yes.”

“ You noticed when you came up, she did fall on my neck, didn’t she? ”

“ Emphatically! ”

“ Thank you. I thought so. I was just wondering— ”

“ I was too. I really hope you aren’t holding it against me, all this business of tearing you young things quite literally from each other’s arms. I have nothing against you, as I said, but—for very good reasons, it couldn’t go on—at least now. You may be sure that I shouldn’t have embarked on any such ridiculous business as chasing eloping daughters in a machine, if it hadn’t been necessary. I really have a reason.”

“ I believe you, sir.”

After that there was little more conversation, and when they reached the big house in Brookline at last, neither man had spoken for an hour.

Mr. Longdon absolutely insisted that Jack should come in for a minute.

“ I have some more things to say to you,” he remarked, “ and we can discuss them comfort-

ably here, over a before-dinner glass, if you say."

"I am sorry sir, but—"

"No buts. You have caused me enough trouble to-day. Now do one thing for me and come in."

"Very well, sir."

They sat down in the living-room to talk things over. Scarcely had they begun, when a maid brought in a telegram for Mr. Longdon. Asking Jack's pardon for a moment, he opened it.

The contents seemed to interest him vitally. His face grew pale at first, then flaming red. He sprang up, rapidly crumpling and uncrumpling the yellow sheet in his hand, and started pacing furiously round the room.

"Mr. Longdon, Mr. Longdon," cried Jack, really fearing apoplexy, "can't I do anything?"

"Yes. Keep still."

And he stormed out of the room, leaving Jack bewildered as to what to do next.

In a minute the maid came in again.

"Are you Mr. J. Harris?" she asked.

"Yes."

"A telegram for you, sir." She held it out to him, then hesitated. "And—the man that

runs the machine—he's back again—and says that you will have something for him."

" I? "

" Yes, sir."

" I don't know what he means. Wait till I look at this."

He opened the telegram, wondering if its contents were likely to give *him* apoplexy. They very nearly did. He read:

" Jack: Sorry but we had to. Seems like a dirty trick but only way there was. Curtis and I are on our way to New York to get married. Forgive me and soothe Father if you can. We told our chauffeur that you would give him something for being out of the way.—Evelyn."

Jack sat down in a chair with a gasp. The maid watched him with curiosity.

" More bad news? " she ventured.

" Yes. No. Good news, I think—I don't really know. Where is Mr. Longdon? "

Mr. Longdon just then came striding in. Jack's telegram caught his eye.

" Did you get one too? "

" Yes."

" What does it say? "

" They're off to be married."

“ Does she say where? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Where? ”

“ I don’t think I should say.”

“ Yes you should. You should! ”

Jack thought a moment.

“ I’ll get even with her—and—him,” he said to himself. And then to Mr. Longdon:

“ They’ve gone—to Newburyport.”

PHILIP R. MECHEM.



HAPPILY EVER AFTER





## HAPPILY EVER AFTER



JOE COOGAN! I had not seen him, nor, to tell the truth, thought very much about him for five years. Back in college, in the prehistoric days it seemed to me, I had known him very well and liked him. We had been intimate as far as wearing each other's collars and neckties constitutes intimacy. We had lived together for one year, and we had been more like friends than roommates. Now here he was, stepping up to me out of the crowd on the street, and holding out his hand. It is curious how friends come and go; they are the most vivid part of your life; they disappear and you forget them; then suddenly there they are, in an unfamiliar pattern, and you are thinking tremendously about them, trying to catch up the thread of their memories and set it going again in the woof of every-day life. I had heard little of him since we graduated. He had, I knew, gone to Europe to continue his studies. He had special-

ised in Byzantine culture or some outlandish thing like that. I remember he used to stand a lot of chaffing about it. That was hardly the sort of thing for me. I had gone directly into the office, and in my way I was not making a bad reputation for myself. He looked well enough. I wondered what he had been doing. He had sent me, I recalled, a vivid set of post-cards representing the joys to be found at an American bar in Paris, but neither of us was the kind to write letters. Still, however little we knew about each other, I think both of us were very glad to meet again.

I remembered his tastes, I thought, and started steering him gently toward the swinging doors. I myself am not a fair sample of the Great American Boozefighter. I know no bartenders by their love-names, nor can I, to tell the truth, ever learn to order a cocktail with perfect assurance as to just what I am going to get. But I thought I remembered Coogan, and one must have a place to talk.

Joe hesitated. Then he smiled.

"No thanks. I've sworn off. My wife won't let me."

"Married!" and I suppose I gasped. "Well." Then I said "well" again; for it is

a good word. I might have said more, and used the simple and expressive but profane diction of our college days, but I was not sure how far his moral regeneration had gone. I shook his hand. One must seem enthusiastic about these things.

“Who is it?” I went on, “Helena?” For I remembered something about his passionate devotion to a goddess of that name.

Joe smiled again. He smiled frequently, I thought. He did not seem to realise what a serious proposition marriage is nowadays. He seemed to take it as a joke.

“No,” he said, “there’s a story to that. She isn’t Helena.”

We finally agreed to walk uptown to the park, and sit on a bench and watch the squirrels, and listen to the sad, sweet stories of our lives—he to tell of love and marriage and courtship, and I of the economics of corporations and the romance of modern business accounting.

We never got to business accounting; we never even touched on it, so you are safe, gentle reader. After all, this is mostly Joe Coogan’s story. I come into it only in the most explanatory and incidental way. Perhaps I had better let him tell the story himself,

as he told it to me that day in the park, with the people ever passing our bench, and some of the shop-girls looking curiously at us as they passed, and some hurrying by, and always the great sun falling to the west. It was a story he liked to tell. As I watched him, his eyes fixed on the horizon—as if he sought there to read his story—and smiling a little to himself, I felt suddenly that after all I did not know him so very well, and that it was quite preposterous that I should be listening to his story. But I did not blame him for liking to tell it, or for smiling. After all, every man, and I myself—But there I am bringing myself into the story again, which is not what I promised the reader.

You remember, don't you (this is about what he said), how very sentimentally I used to imagine myself in love with Helena Dyer? Or rather you don't. People kidded me about her at college, but they never imagined just how foolish I really was about her. If they had, I don't believe they would have cared to associate with me. For you were always a practical bunch. But anyway, I was shockingly infatuated with her.

I don't remember exactly when it started. I remember the first day I saw her, and in the

days of my madness I used to persuade myself that I had fallen in love with her at first sight. That was in the grammar school, my first bewildering day among a staring horde of new faces. I was given a seat behind her, so that the first thing I could settle my eyes on was the back of her neck. Perhaps it *was* love at first sight. Certainly at twelve I was as sentimental as ever I was at eighteen. You may not have felt the same way. All children may not be so precocious. I don't know.

Helena Dyer! The very name is a part of me. I collected memories of her as other boys do coupons or stamps. I suppose after all I was beforehand in my development. I started "going with her" as they said in school. I hung round in a rather diffident, shamed way, and I continued to do so all the way through college. I used to go down to her house, and when I got older I took her round to things. In school I was regarded as a sort of accepted suitor. But I never was. I never was her "gentleman friend." I was always just a person. No romantic halo or charm of mystery ever hung round my head. She knew me too well. I used to think of things like kissing her hand and murmuring careless little references



to my admiration for her. But I never worked them. There wasn't any chance. Still, people prophesied freely about our future relations, and offered to place bets on the result, so that at least I scared the others away, and kept the field clear.

I don't know exactly what the Dyers thought of me. I don't know that they ever did think. They took me for granted. When I came calling, they never cleared off the piazza or deserted the parlor or arranged any other of the charming little lures that other families do. They all crowded out, and each seemed to think that it was his individual presence and personality from which I was seeking inspiration.

The old man taught me to play pinochle, and in the evenings we used to have great battles, while the rest of the family practised on the piano or sewed or read aloud or criticised our game. Did I tell you about the rest of the family? I should have. Helena has three brothers and a sister, all younger than herself. I think one of the primary causes of my sturdy constitution is the thorough and vigorous training in the rough-house arts that those brothers put me through. I have the scars on my shins yet. Red-headed,

every one of them. Helena has red hair, you know. They all have except Mrs. Dyer, and she is the least accentuated of the whole family. Somehow I like red hair.

Not that I ever minded the rough-house. It was good fun, sometimes. One of our common and preferred games was that the three brothers were hairy cave-men, and that I was a sabre-tooth tiger. They lived under the piano, and I had to try and eat them in their cave.

But I don't want to forget Lulu. Lulu was the kid sister. She was my pet aversion. No disturbance was complete without her. Generally she claimed that she was coming to my rescue. As after years of contact with her brothers she had developed a military system, absolutely irresistible for offence or defence, there was woe to the hapless victim whom she attempted to rescue. He was in the midst of a battle royal. She was a curious child; not like her sister, I thought; at times serious and thoughtful, and again impetuous. She informed me once that she had a "crush" on me, and tried to sit on my lap. When I resisted she grew angry, and afterwards she would wait in ambush for me in dark places,

and try to kiss me, which made the family laugh. She was finally convinced that her attachment was quite unanswered and hopeless.

O, I had my trials!

It's pretty hard to seem the passionate lover in that kind of a family. I used to see Helena a lot, but I saw the rest of the family just as much, and generally at the same time. Sunday nights after supper, in the kitchen, I remember as the one time when I might look forward to being alone with her. Those Sunday evenings I shall not forget. Why should I? Then when we had cleared off the dishes from the supper table, I washed and she wiped. I remember I used to think about those evenings and torture myself when I heard that she was married to a man named Spigotty. O, he's a nice fellow. But I'll come to that. Those Sunday nights! I would talk and she would listen and laugh and say, "You're crazy, Joey dear," to my extravagancies. Then I would raise my hands, all soapy and wet, in vehemence, and she would laugh again, and I would have to be silent.

But that's all over now, and here I am, a happy married man, telling it to you, what I have never told, all out, to any man, although

I've always wanted to. I imagine every man likes to tell people about his love. It's one way of expressing it. People are brought up to be reticent, but it only makes them more sentimental. I can stand off now, and look at the whole thing impersonally, and laugh a little at myself for what I was. I suppose I'm muddling up my story. What I've been trying to show you is just what an unromantic position I was in. It was no hero's job. If I had ridden up to the front stoop on a red roan steed, and haughtily demanded Helena as my spouse, the kid brothers would all have insisted on coming for a ride, too, and the old man would have carefully taken off his spectacles and asked, "Where'd you get the horse, Joe?"

I suppose, as a matter of fact, it was much better that Helena didn't like me well enough to marry me. We never knew each other so very well. We took each other too much as a matter of course. And yet I feel that I was honestly, sincerely in love with her.

I went away to college, and of course we did not see each other so often. We used to write letters back and forth. Hers came generally on Thursdays. Sometimes they did not, but that was, I think, because she forgot to

mail them. I am sure that she always wrote them at the same time. My letters, as my style and familiarity with literature of a certain type improved, grew more and more absurd and ridiculous. When I came home, I sometimes attempted to talk in this high-sounding, peremptory vein, which was another mistake. Helena would say nothing except, "You're crazy, Joey dear." And now she did not laugh so much.

I remember the last talk of this kind I had with her. I did not know at the time that it was really our final parting, that is so far as being in love with her goes; but I remember it now. When I saw her again she was married. This talk has always persisted in my mind as singularly inconsequential. It was the day I sailed. I had decided to do something drastic. My father suggested that I continue my studies, and offered to pay my expenses abroad. I planned to make one last appeal to Helena, and if that failed, to try to forget her by going away. Helena came down to the boat to see me off. Of course Lulu had to be with her. We managed to lose the kid for a minute on the deck, and I had my opportunity. I can see now just how I spoiled it. If I had been a

trifle less absolute and positive in my expressions, if I had not talked quite so much, she might have weakened. This story would have been different. As it was, in spite of the inane language I had borrowed from my sentimental reading, I think I made her see, perhaps for the first time, just how much her decision did count with me. It was hard for her, I know. She let me hold her hand, but she only said, "I'm sorry, Joey." I think I told her at the time that she was cruel and heartless, but I know I thought she was a very fine girl. And she was. She was worth twice the noisy puppy I was.

It was Lulu who came up then and stopped the forensics. She was at that time singularly unfortunate in her appearance—rather pale, freckled, a gaunt, long-legged girl of fourteen or fifteen, whose hair was constantly coming down in little shreds. Now in her best clothes she looked even more awkward; she was not used to them. Her beauty was something to be sought for, not easily appreciated.

Helena kissed me good-bye when she went, which gave me a certain melancholy pleasure until Lulu followed it up with a warm and quite unexpected smack. At that moment I detested her.



I'll skip over what I did in Europe. It doesn't matter very much. I learned a lot, about some things. My knowledge of women, if I may so pompously claim any acquaintance with the opposite sex, was considerably broadened and deepened. I learned to appreciate Helena truly as I had not before. After all, our women are the best and finest and truest in the world. I saw how unworthy I was of her. It was just about the time that I was getting ready to admit that she was worth ten of me, that she sent me a letter announcing her approaching marriage. Now a man may admit that he is unworthy of a woman, but he is also unwilling to admit that there is any other man who is. The news struck me quite unexpectedly. She had not told me before, because she had not been sure. After all, why should I make a fuss? The man's name was Spigotty, Chester Spigotty. Probably I had changed my mind anyhow. She invited me to come and call on them immediately when I returned.

I returned, immediately. I don't know exactly what sort of an idea I had, something like that stunt of Young Lochinvar's, I suppose. O! I was there with the "pep" and anxiety for personal hand-to-hand conflict all right.



The trouble was that when I got home, they were already married, and settled down in a little house on the other side of the town. And then again I could find no fault with Spigotty, outside of the fact that I did not like the name.

Coogan, "Joey dear," paused, perhaps for dramatic purposes, perhaps to catch his breath. He eyed me quizzically. (This is a favorite performance of heroes.) Then fixing his eyes once more dreamily on the horizon, he continued his monologue.

When I got home, I found I had very little to do. I had not been expected back so soon, and so nothing had been arranged in the line of work to greet the prodigal. I vacillated about, thinking too much. I did not go to see the Dyers. I went to see hardly any one. I was posing desperately as a heartbroken lover. I thoroughly pitied myself. You know you get a lot of pleasure out of coddling little false sentimentalities. And you start writing poetry. I did that. And you walk alone in the night, and raise your arms majestically to the stars, and consign your Creator to everlasting damnation and oblivion. It is very pleasant for a time, though it palls.

There is a hill near our house which used to be the scene of many of these transports. I wandered moodily there, until I came to where I could see facing me on another small hill the Dyers' house. I could see the piazza where we had sat, and the steps, and even where one end of the boards had been worn down by people coming up that corner. Once in a while I would see some one moving about, but usually the house seemed very quiet now. I never met any of the family. I kept away from the streets where I might encounter them.

Then one day I did see her. I was running across the hill when I saw a girl with a green umbrella drying her red hair in the sun. It lay and shimmered on a warm rock. My heart leapt almost before I was sure that I saw her. I could never mistake her. She was much less changed than one might have supposed. I suppose I expected, and rather hoped her to be, a little bit coarsened, more matronly at least, than she was. There were slight changes, perhaps; there always are. But it was she. You know the words they use in musical comedies, "my one girl, my dream girl." That's the way I felt. She had still that frank maiden's look

of hers. I stopped. I should have liked to retreat. But she saw me.

“O Joey,” she called joyously.

I felt suddenly curiously angry. So she was married now. She had betrayed me, but she thought that with a word she could call me back to her service again. She probably missed my attentions now that she was married. I would show her I was not to be trifled with. I would show her that I was as dangerous as any man, that one should not play with fire. I'm not trying to excuse myself. You think me an idiot. Of course I was; I admit it. I went to her stupidly and took her in my arms.

I had expected that she would struggle, and in between her panting gasps for help, I would plant my kisses on her mouth; that she would fly from my approach with little shrieks, till running behind her I should catch and hold her. Nothing of the kind happened. She rose and gave me her hand, with a smile; and when I put my arm round her, she said nothing. I looked down at her from my superiority. She looked at me and smiled again; and then she blushed, and with her free hand started to straighten my necktie. Then she grew restless.

“ You’re awfully warm, Joey,” she said, “ don’t hold me so tight.”

I let her go. She sat down and made a place for me beside her. Then she moved up a little closer, and gave me the green parasol to hold. At last she seemed perfectly comfortable. I was dazed. O, I thought, if I had tried this before, I might have had better luck. And then I thought, no. This is her marriage. That is what has changed her. She is no longer a maiden. She is not even a faithful wife. Once let her restraint go, and she becomes absolutely free. I was horrified. Though I had often pictured our meeting with many dramatic details, they had never been such as these. It was to be in the dim future, and full of gentle, half-regretful allusions from both parties. Suddenly I felt it repulsive, this sensual surrender. She was morally unclean. I was not only disgusted, but I was sorry for the deceived husband. Now this woman, married to an honest man, was lying close to me, whom she had once rejected. Her head was on my shoulder. I felt it there. Her red hair was down and falling all over me. I started to talk.

It was a good talk. I wish I could remember it. I went into full details of the psychology

of my past and present life. How I had loved, and how I had lost, and how now I had found again. My ideals and now their utter destruction. The terrifying spectacle of an unchaste woman—woman, the core of society. She grew serious at that, and I continued. I spoke of my growing cynicism—of how until that day I had not believed a woman could be so vile. Now I distrusted the whole sex. I was no longer deceived. They were merely animals and should be treated as such. I despaired of the whole human race. I pointed out only two prospects now open to me—the river, or an attempt to forget all in a vast career of dissipation.

She put her warm arms about my neck, and I thought she wept.

She did not. She was laughing. Why should she laugh? O, she was low. And yet? She was laughing. I was offended.

“O Joey dear,” she said; “you’re crazy. I’m not married. I’m not Helena. I’m Lulu.”

So I had made a mistake.

I made no more.

And that evening I played pinochle with the old man Dyer, and the three Dyer brothers, now stronger and heavier, loosened two of my favorite teeth.

And after supper I washed the dishes, and Lulu sat on the kitchen table and laughed and pretended to wipe them.

Thus Joseph Coogan, Esq., finished the long and rather drawn out narrative of his sad, sweet life. We indulged then intermittently in harmless badinage, without ever recurring to the romance of modern business accounting. That is what rankles, never even to mention the subject. Suddenly he recollected a certain train, which he, in his capacity of successful suburbanite, was obliged to catch. So we parted with many mutual promises to meet again.

This story should end here. I imagine it does, and has left me going on talking. But that evening, when the stars were out, when I had eaten my lonely dinner in a restaurant, I left the lights and walked long pavement miles and thought long thoughts. I passed down spacious streets lined with ornate house-fronts, and down narrower streets where the houses came in less imposing rows. And always as I walked, I peered strangely at the windows. Perhaps within I should see somewhere a red-headed girl who laughed when she wiped dishes.

EDWARD C. PARK.

# THE GRAN'SON CREW







## THE GRAN'SON CREW

**B**YLOW BAY is a snug little cove; its circling shore of yellow sand looks like a doughnut with one bite gone where the fishers' boats come sailing in. And not all sandy shore either. Opposite the narrow opening there is a cliff, a high rocky crag that rises sheer from the bay and has a crooked tree on top. Peg-Toe's Oak they call the tree. It can be seen for many miles, but especially from the village of fishing huts out near the channel to the sea.

This is the village of Bylow, and a quaint little unassuming village it is, built all of rough logs and driftwood. The whole village stands awry upon the greensward, as if it had floated in with the tide, and had been left where the wind and waves tossed it.

In the village of Bylow everything is on a small scale. There is nothing of which even the poor fishermen need be proud, excepting the scarecrow, who dangles lonely from the small

end of a broken oar far back in the cornfield. The scarecrow is a sight to wonder at. For being dressed in the fishers' old clothes, all covered with bright fish scales, he glistens from top to toe, like a knight in armor, when the sun shines.

The scarecrow is the property of the whole village of Bylow; for the people live very happily together, away from the rest of the world, like one great family, and all that they have, they have in common. There is a wide pasture that stretches from the cornfield to the shore, where some nibbling sheep and a group of sober cows stand like copy models all day long, as if to set a good example for the long-legged calf that will not keep still. Nearer the village there is an old ramshackle barn from behind which a prolonged squealing and grunting gives warning of a pig pen, and down on the beach there is a row of small fishing-boats drawn up among the drying nets. There are no roads in the village, but foot-paths run criss-cross from door to door. Barefooted men and women in checkered aprons pass occasionally with tubs on their heads or baskets on their arms, while little children play among the pecking hens and parading geese.

To this quiet little village in the summer of 19— came Roving Dick, a young man in white flannel trousers and a red sweater. A manly tanned fellow was Roving Dick, with curly brown hair and blue eyes and a happy-go-lucky laugh. His small leg-of-mutton sail-boat had come nosing its way into the little cove of its own accord, while he lay dreaming over an old romantic tale of the sea. The singular beauty of the little round bay delighted him. He landed near the wide pasture, and to the great amazement of the foolish calf, that fled in alarm, pitched his tent upon the green.

The children gathered at a distance to watch him toting his camp utensils up from the boat. And when he had made a fire of driftwood and had hung a bright kettle over it to boil, the bolder of the children came nearer. But they stood very still, for they were not accustomed to see strangers in the village of Bylow, and when Roving Dick spoke to them, they all turned their heads over their shoulders.

However, he was a pleasant young fellow, and sitting down on a stone, to watch his kettle boil, he told them stories about the big world outside of their little one, about fire-engines and electric cars and steamboats.

"What is a steamboat?" asked one of the older boys at length.

And the young man laughed. "What, you never saw a steamboat? Well, you should just see one! A great big boat that wags a tail like a fish when it wants to sail."

"I guess Peg-Toe never had one like that," said the boy, turning to his companions. And they all shook their heads.

"Who is Peg-Toe?" asked Dick.

"Peg-Toe? He's the one who planted the tree," said the boy, pointing with an arm to the solitary oak high up on the cliff over the bay.

"Peg-Toe did that, did he?"

"Him and his crew did, so as they could find it again."

"The tree?"

"Aye," said the boy, "and the gold they buried under it."

"Ho, ho!" cried Dick. "So they buried gold there! And never came back for it?"

"Not yet, they didn't. But they're a-comin'. They're a-comin' all right, and then won't there be a time, you bet!"

There was something in the boy's manner of telling it that amused the young man.

"Why will there be such a time?" he asked.

"'Cause the gold ain't there no more," said the boy. "Black Brows has come and took it away long ago, when gran'father was no bigger than the table."

"Brrr!" laughed Dick. "What pirates' nest have I got into now?"

He stood for a while shading his eyes, critically gazing up at the tree on the cliff across the bay.

"Not a bad place for a tree, that," he said at length. "And so this band of buccaneers is coming back? Ha, ha, ha!" And he laughed as if it were the funniest thing he had heard in all his life.

"Not Peg-Toe self," said the boy who had spoken before. "It is Peg-Toe's Gran'son who is comin' again, Peg-Toe's Gran'son and a gran'son crew."

At this the young man laughed more than ever, and the children wondered.

Roving Dick did not tarry long in Bylow, yet he won the hearts of the simple fisher folk. He listened eagerly to their stumbling accounts of Peg-Toe and the pirate crew. They were not apt in story-telling, these sturdy brown fishermen; they could tell little more than the

children. Some of the men took him to the top of the cliff and showed him the very place where the gold had been buried, showed him where the pirate ship had anchored, and how the buccaneers had climbed the hill by the grassy slope on the southern shore. All this delighted Roving Dick. He drew pictures and wrote notes in his journal, that he might tell his friends at home about it. Then after four or five days he rolled up his tent, waved his hand to the fishermen on the beach, and hoisting his little leg-of-mutton sail, rode swiftly out on the ebbing tide through the narrow channel to the sea.

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It was drawing toward the end of the summer and the corn had grown to such a height that the strange scare-crow could hardly be seen, when the good people of Bylow discovered one day that Roving Dick had returned. There was the tent on the edge of the pasture, and there was Dick, the same Dick, in the same red sweater and white flannel trousers. The children came running to his tent, and every day the people sent him presents of good things to eat, for they were glad to see him again. Even the long-legged calf, which had become more sensible



during the summer, seemed anxious to be friendly and came to browse close by.

“ Well,” said Dick to the children on the first day of his return, “ hasn’t Peg-Toe come yet? ”

“ Not yet,” they answered, “ but he’s a-com-in’, you bet! ”

And Dick laughed his merry laugh and told them more stories of the wide world. But for all his laughing the pirates came.

It was not many days after Dick had returned: a sunny blue morning of September, with the brisk air curling the smoke from the chimney tops, and a small white rag of a cloud scudding over the bay.

“ Peg-Toe,” whispered some one in the village, “ Peg-Toe has come! ”

And immediately there was great excitement. Frantic geese, wild chicks, frightened children, and anxious mothers were running about everywhere. But only for a moment till the little ones were hidden away in the houses. Then all became suddenly very still. The women stood at the doors shading their eyes. The men, collected in small groups on the beach, were pointing out over the bay.

And there was a marvelous sight! A ship

had just come through the narrow strait under full sail. And what a ship! Short and high and black as tar, all bristling with cannon. The sails were square-rigged and bellying in the wind, and there was a black flag at the masthead. Now the ship was within a stone's throw of the shore, tilted in such a way that the whole deck could be seen from stem to stern. And it was a fierce cutlass-girdled crew that stood there.

But the ship did not stop. It sailed to the opposite shore, close down to the foot of the cliff, where the anchor was let go and the crew could be seen—hurrying little black figures up in the rigging, furling the sails.

After a while small boats were seen to leave the further side. They were loaded with pirates, who landed on the shore near the foot of the cliff. Only a few began to climb immediately; these could be seen starting up through the shrubbery of the southern slope. The rest remained in a crowd near the boats. There appeared to be some dispute. A number of them were tugging at what looked like three or four small chests. Apparently some wished to carry them up to the top of the cliff, others wanted them left behind. This was the cause of the trouble, as nearly as the watching fisher-

men could discern; but they were too far away to distinguish the leaders from the rest; and what finally became of the chests they could not tell.

"Poor discipline!" muttered one of the fishermen.

"Aye," said another. "'Tain't Peg-Toe self. There'd be no dallyin' with Peg-Toe self. It's Peg-Toe's Gran'son with a gran'son crew."

Several small boats had passed between the shore and the vessel before the trouble seemed to be settled. Then up started the pirates, leaving only a few behind on the beach.

"God help us when they reach the top and find there ain't no gold!" said one of the fishers. "They'll be a-sayin' we took it, and they'll be a-comin' here."

Suddenly another of the fishermen cried out, "Look, there's a fight!"

Half-way up the slope the pirates had stopped. Some of them appeared to be struggling. Perhaps it was the old dispute about the chests. Men could be seen hurling themselves upon one another with cutlasses and pistol-shots. Soon there was nothing but a white cloud of smoke showing on the hill-side. And when this blew away, the men were moving on again under one who flourished a sword and seemed the leader.

At length they reached the top of the cliff. They could be seen moving about near the tree, and occasionally there were shots, so that a white cloud appeared up there in the blue sky. But just what they did, none of the fishermen could tell.

Meanwhile Roving Dick had been awakened by the first shots on the hillside. He appeared, tousled and sleepy, rubbing his eyes at the opening of his tent. Then, espying the strange ship across the bay, he hurried down to the fishermen on the beach.

He was flushed and excited. "Is it Peg-Toe?" he cried, elbowing his way forward.

"Gran'son!" answered the fishers stolidly. "Gran'son and gran'son crew!"

"And the gold is gone? Ho, ho, ho!" And the young man burst into uncontrolled laughter, stamping the sand in his mad glee.

But the fishers had become used to these strange laughing-fits, and paid no attention to him. After a few moments one of the men added:

"They're up there now. They'll be comin' here when they see it's gone."

"Will they?" said the young man, but he did not cease from laughing.

It was more than an hour later when they noticed him again. His tent was gone. Dick was in his boat a few feet from the shore, where he was trying to shake loose his little leg-of-mutton sail.

The fishers rushed anxiously along the shore towards him.

"Don't leave us, don't leave us now!" they cried.

But the young man had hoisted his sail; and the little boat moved swiftly away from the shore.

"Trust to Dick, trust to Roving Dick!" cried the young man, laughing softly in his peculiar way. And then he steered for the high cliff where the pirates had landed.

The fishers watched him in silence. It was now past midday; the sun was high in the heavens and shone with blinding brilliancy straight in their faces. They lost sight of him when he reached the shore. Later they made out three men climbing up the slope to the top of the cliff. And somehow they felt that Bylow was safe.

At evening the strange ship with the pirate crew sailed out of the little bay. Up on the cliff where the sky was all red with the setting

sun, a black something could be seen hanging from a branch of Peg-Toe's oak.

"Poor Dick," said the fishermen.

But the next morning when they had climbed up there, what was their surprise to find that the black something hanging from the tree was nothing more nor less than their own scarecrow. They had not seen how Roving Dick had smuggled it out of the cornfield, and rolled it up in his tent. And how could they know that the pirates were not real pirates, but only moving-picture actors dressed up as buccan-ers! Roving Dick had not told them that he had written a scenario the first time he was there and heard the legend of Peg-Toe and the pirates. What could the poor fishermen understand of films and biographs? They could not even see that the black chests which had been carried up the hill were only cameras. And so the good people of Bylow still believe that it was Peg-Toe's Gran'son with a gran'son crew.

CHARLES C. PETERSEN.

## OUR SPHINX







## OUR SPHINX

T WAS the first of February, and as was my wont at such times I stopped a moment in the hall to see if my tradesmen were still constant in their attentions. As I sorted the mail I came upon three postcards addressed to Jethro Pike, known variously among us fellows as "Jerry" and "The Sphinx." I turned them over idly and found them, as I expected, notifications of the marks he had received in some of his mid-year examinations. Of course it was none of my business what Pike got for marks, but in college we all had a more or less worried interest in the grades given out, and our code of ethics was sufficiently broad to allow the perusal of other men's examination cards. To my surprise I found that Pike had received A's (excellent) in two advanced mathematical courses and a C (signifying just passing and termed colloquially a gentleman's mark) in a notoriously "cinch" course in Economics.

“Here’s an interesting combination,” I remarked to Bill Wheeler, who had just strolled in after his weekly conference with the Dean. “Our friend Pike must possess a brilliant mind, but he’s about as practical as the Wraith of Dundee. Here he goes and drags an A from old Dr. Forster while roaming about in space on the back of a Calculus formula, and yet just succeeds in ‘getting by’ Johnston’s graft course. That boy ought to have his brain balanced.”

“Oh, that’s the fellow who sings all night,” replied Wheeler. “He’s likely to do anything. Why, just the other night he kept me awake till three, singing, ‘You Made Me What I Am To-Day’ in the most doleful voice imaginable.”

“Well, if he did that,” I said rather unsympathetically, fitting my key in the lock, “there are good traits in Pike which I have never suspected. I must investigate him.”

For five or six months “The Sphinx” and I had passed each other in the halls and in the Yard with but a casual word of greeting. He was a flaxen-haired, mild-looking chap, and to my knowledge did not possess a single intimate friend in the whole University.

That evening I called on him, using as a

pretext my inability to solve a mathematical difficulty which I had run across in one of my courses. As a matter of fact I had encountered the difficulty by purposely looking for it in an old algebra I possessed. The problem was a simple one, which I could have solved myself without trouble, although I had not studied mathematics since my school-days.

"Hello, Pike," I said, as I stood in his doorway. "I understand you are a 'math shark,' so I've come in to get your assistance in a little difficulty. Can you spare me a minute or two?"

"Come in," was the answer. At the sound of his voice I started. His speech, ordinarily well modulated, was thick and unsteady.

"Anything wrong? Feeling badly?" I asked hesitatingly.

"Oh, no, I'm all right," he replied abruptly. "Let's see your problem."

Somewhat piqued, I did not volunteer further conversation but wandered about the room, idly examining the various knick-knacks which adorned the shelves and the walls. Finally I sat back in his Morris chair while waiting for Pike to finish his work. From where I sat, I could see into the bedroom which was faintly

illuminated by the electric lamps in the study. Against the farther wall, on what I took to be the dresser, glimmered a myriad of bright points of light. As my eyes became adjusted to the distance, I discerned that they were the reflections from the study lamps on cut-glass and plain bottles of all shapes and sizes, so numerous as to cover the whole surface of the dresser. My speculations concerning their contents were interrupted by Pike's querulously declaring that he was unable to make head or tail of my equations.

"Well, well!" I exclaimed, slightly mystified. "Didn't you get an A in Dr. Forster's course on Probabilities?"

"Yes," admitted Pike with a wry smile, "but this evening I'm not in very good shape, I guess, old chap. Come round some other time, will you?"

His hand shook as he handed back my paper, and I asked with genuine sympathy if I could do anything for him. I now saw that his eyes were deep-set, and burning with a flame I did not like.

"No, no," was the impatient rejoinder. "I'm tired out but I shall be all right to-morrow. Good night."

I returned to my room, two flights down, and started working. Half an hour later I was hailed from above-stairs, and going to the door I saw Pike leaning over the railing. He was red-cheeked, bright of eye, seemingly entirely rejuvenated.

"Oh, Andrews," he called. "Bring that Chinese puzzle of yours up here now, will you? I'm feeling better and guess I can handle it."

I ascended the stairs three at a time and entered Pike's room.

"Have a chair," he said genially, at the same time pushing me good-naturedly into a soft lounging chair. "There are cigars in the humidor, and if you drink, here's the key to my cellar. I'll be through here in a jiffy."

What a marvelous store of reserve energy the fellow must have, I thought, as I selected a fragrant Havana. Half an hour ago he was on the rocks and now he's chipper as a squirrel. I realised also for the first time that Pike was really quite a likable chap if one could only get to know him well enough. Besides, his taste in rye was commendable in the extreme. In a few minutes my problem was solved and Pike and I sat for an hour or more chatting over college affairs.

During the next two weeks I was unusually busy and did not even see Pike except at a distance. On a Friday evening I was dressing for a Boston dance when Wheeler happened in.

"Hello, Andrews," was his careless greeting. "That tawny-haired Swede of yours is in another of his musical moods. He's tearing the strings off a mandolin now and howling his old favorite, 'You Made Me What I Am To-Day.' It's too much for me. I'm going down to visit an undertaker I know. Doctor says I must keep cheerful."

I opened the door and strode into the hall. True enough, the most melancholy music I had ever listened to was being profusely poured forth by the strange "Sphinx" of Thayer Hall. I had neither the time nor the inclination to listen to the lugubrious serenade, so I hurriedly finished dressing and left for the ball.

The tired and hungry orchestra did not put aside their instruments until three the next morning—several hours after the Cambridge Subway had locked its doors, put out its lights, and gone to bed.

"Hey, Cabby," I called to the sleepy admiral of a sea-going hack. "Come to long enough to take me aboard. Drop me somewhere in



Harvard Yard any time between now and my nine o'clock class."

For some reason or other which I was too weary to inquire into, the driver elected to reach Cambridge by one of the lower bridges. Half way over the river I noticed the figure of a man lurching drunkenly along. Something about the figure struck me as familiar—the way the shoulders were carried, and the slight stoop. As we came abreast of the object of my speculation, he tacked the wrong way and struck a lamp post with some force. His hat rolled off, and as he stooped to fumble for it, the light from the arc lamp above gleamed on his bared head.

"There's only one head of hair like that this side of Sweden," I yelled to the mystified cabman. "Hold up a bit while I give a friend a lift."

I jumped from the cab and ran to the side of Pike, for it was he, and half dragged, half pushed his limp form through the door.

Only once on the trip to Cambridge did he open his mouth and then he uttered an apparently nonsensical observation which later proved pitifully prophetic.

"Andrews," he said huskily—he had recog-

nised me despite his befuddled condition—"I'm a clever fellow—too damned clever, and—" here his voice sank so low I could barely make out the words, "and then when I thought I had the world in my grasp, the hand of God steps in."

"Aside from a little confusion in your figures of speech," I replied flippantly, "about the only correction to be made in your observations is to allow the hand of God to leap in. It isn't stepping much these days."

Then we both lapsed into a silence which lasted until the cab drew up before our dormitory in the Yard. Pike was in better shape by this time and got out without assistance. I started to help him up the stairs but he pushed me back savagely.

"Let me alone," he growled. "I've seen enough of you."

I shrugged my shoulders and allowed him to make his way by himself. Too often I had had to put morose tipplers to bed, and the task was not one I craved. I entered my room and began to undress. Scarcely had I removed my waistcoat when I heard a confused scuffling above me and a hoarse shout or two. I stood tense, every nerve alert, waiting for a repetition of the

sounds. In a moment I heard a door slam and the padding of a man running swiftly downstairs in his bare feet. My door was flung open and in rushed Wheeler, his face ashen and his eyes wide with a terror he did not try to conceal.

"Andrews," he gasped, as he closed and locked my door behind him. "There's a crazy man, or a vampire, or—or something terrible in my room. He tried to choke me to death. He's seven feet tall. For God's sake don't let him come in here."

The poor fellow was beside himself. I endeavored to calm him, at the same time trying to get at what had happened. The facts as I elicited them one by one were as follows:—

Wheeler had been asleep in his room when he was awakened by hearing a chair overturned.

"Who's there?" he had called sleepily, rising on his elbow.

At the sound of Wheeler's voice the intruder had hurled himself upon him snarling and cursing, and had it not been that the stranger seemed dazed, Wheeler would soon have been a candidate for a graveyard. As it was, Bill had wriggled free and escaped, dashing into my room when he saw the light shining over the transom.

Wheeler finally consented to stay where he was while I went to reconnoitre. The affair was serious, but I could not help chuckling at the thought of poor drunken Pike falling into what he took for his own bed and finding it occupied. Pike's room was directly above Wheeler's and the mistake was an easy one for a man in Pike's condition to make.

When I reached the scene of the conflict I struck a match. On Wheeler's bed lay the disheveled figure of Pike, as I expected. I shook him by the shoulder and finally succeeded in making him realise that he was in the wrong quarters. This time I assisted him upstairs.

"Able to get to bed all right?" I asked, as Pike sank limply into a chair. "If not, you had better let me help you."

I was leaning against his desk, and as I spoke I idly picked up a manuscript which was lying there, thinking it a thesis in the process of preparation. Quite absent-mindedly I had glanced over the first page with no idea as to what the contents might be, when the manuscript was snatched from my fingers and I received a stinging blow in the face. I looked up and saw Pike standing before me, his features tense and drawn, his eyes glaring at me with a demoniacal

expression. The papers were in his nerveless hands which were clenching and unclenching convulsively.

“ You will try to steal my secret, you damned hound,” he gasped. “ I knew that’s what you were after when you came sneaking round my room the other night. But I’ll fool you, I’ll fool—” his voice trailed off into incoherency, but still he stood between me and the door, barring my escape.

I took out my handkerchief and wiped away the blood which was trickling into my eyes.

“ You’ve made an awful ass of yourself, Pike,” I told him curtly. “ A man can be a gentleman whether he’s drunk or sober. Now you’ll get to bed as best you can.”

Angrily I started to leave the room, pushing him aside easily. Just before closing the door I glanced backward, and the sight which met my gaze is one which will live long in my memory. Pike was standing in the shower of light beneath the chandelier. At his feet lay scattered the leaves of his precious manuscript which was by now completely forgotten. His right arm was bared to the elbow and gory from three or four nasty wounds. As I looked, he bit savagely into a fresh spot on his arm, whim-

pering and whining like an animal in pain. Blood was dripping on the scattered sheets of paper on the floor.

"Pike, for God's sake, man, what are you doing?" I cried, rushing back and shaking him furiously by the shoulder.

"Don't you see them?" he muttered. "There they are now, and they're digging, digging, digging." His voice gradually rose until I feared the whole dormitory would be awakened.

"See them! There they are again," he groaned, his voice filled with agony. "I've tried and I've tried to get them out but I can't. Oh, oh, oh!"

Eventually I quieted him and got him into bed. Then I returned on tiptoe to Wheeler's room where I straightened chairs and put the room in as presentable a shape as I could.

"It's tough on Wheeler," I chuckled grimly, "but what must be, must. Bill will think he's having the D. T.'s but it can't be helped. We can't allow old Pike to get in wrong just because of a fighting jag. Great Scott! how tight that fellow is!"

Wheeler was still trembling when I returned to him in my study. He wouldn't let me in

until I had proved that I was not the vampire that had descended on him. When finally I did get inside, I looked him reproachfully in the eye and asked what he meant by trying to frighten me with his dream.

"Why, there isn't a trace of a struggle in your room," I declared with an affectation of anger. "Besides, I have searched through every room in the hall and there isn't a stranger in any of them. Get along out of here, and if you have any more troubles, for heaven's sake tell them to the Sweeneys or the police, but don't come bothering me."

Wheeler was by this time somewhat ashamed of his display of timidity. He left the room with an outward show of bravery but with his heart quaking, I feel sure. Then I got out a big, fat cigar and sat down to think the matter over.

Pike is awfully drunk, or crazy, or more probably still, a mixture of the two, I thought. If he is drunk, then he is the most peculiar drunk I have ever seen; and if he is crazy, why should he stagger round like a South Sea Islander after a shipwreck?

Then one by one there came into my mind a number of peculiar incidents connected with Pike. I recalled that night when he had been



so patently indisposed, and his subsequent rapid return to normal condition. I thought of the bottles on his dressing bureau, and the mystery as to what they contained. For the first time I realised a fact, too, which had been staring me in the face ever since I had dragged Pike into the cab, but which, because it was so apparent, had not yet caught my attention. This was that all the time I had been with Pike, I had not noticed the least odor of drink. Besides, it was a very peculiar mix-up he had with Wheeler. But then that could be accounted for as one of the idiosyncrasies of an intoxicated man. What I could not understand was why he should bite his arm as he did. Then somewhere in the back of my mind was evolved the recollection that "dope-fiends" had been known to mutilate themselves in this manner while suffering under the hallucination that worms were crawling about under the surface of their skin.

"The very thing," I exclaimed. "I knew something out of the ordinary was wrong with the fellow, but I had not thought of this. To make sure, I must do a little detective work."

Once again I ascended to Pike's room and tried the knob of his door. The latch was

not caught, so the door swung back silently. The moon had now dropped almost below the horizon, but still it furnished enough light to throw a wan glow over the room. By this faint light the manuscript was visible lying scattered on the floor, its formerly immaculate sheets spattered with dark blotches. Curiously I picked it up to determine once for all if Pike's secrecy concerning it had been based on anything, or whether it was merely caused by a temporarily unhinged mind. On tiptoe I walked with it to the window and was just able to make out the closely-written scrawl.

"The fourth dimension is susceptible of proof by either one of two methods," it read. "The first of these is so simple as to be within the comprehension of the educated laymen, and the second, dealing as it does with mathematical formulae of a very complicated nature, has an appeal only for mathematicians. I shall attempt to prove the fourth dimension an entirely logical conception, and later I shall prove its existence mathematically."

I read no further. Pike's attack on me might have been justified by a natural desire to preserve a discovery the elusiveness of which has foiled the world's greatest thinkers; or it may

have been instigated by nothing more nor less than an abnormal mentality. Whatever the cause might be, I put the papers once again on the desk to keep the maid from sweeping them out the next morning. Then I entered the bedroom where Pike was breathing stertorously. He stirred uneasily in his sleep when my shadow darkened his face.

My suspicions were verified. Not even the faintest odor of drink hung about him. Gently I lifted the sleeve of his uninjured arm to pass my hand lightly over the skin. Quite unmistakably I felt a number of small lumps caused by the injection of morphine through an hypodermic needle.

Leaving the bed, I tiptoed to the bureau where I examined the bottles which littered its surface. One of them was labelled "Coleman's Hair Tonic." Its contents were not a liquid, as the label would indicate, but a finely powdered substance similar to snuff. I spilled some out on a sheet of paper and put it in my pocket for future reference. Then I stole from the bedroom, sprung the latch on the study door, and returned to my quarters.

Spring in the college world always seems

the saddest of the four seasons. It seems particularly sad to those members of the college community who have completed the four years required for a degree and are soon to change their habitat for places where life is more strenuous and less comfortable than in stolid old Cambridge. Even when the days are particularly bright and when Nature does all she can to make man satisfied with his lot, the feeling is always hovering somewhere in the background that the happiest, most wholesome days of a man's life are soon to end.

Several weeks after my nerve-racking experiences with Pike, a number of seniors were in my room chatting about the approaching festivities. Eleven o'clock had just sounded from Memorial and the Yard, fresh and green in the May sunshine, was alive with students hurrying to and from classes. Shortly there came a knock on the door, and when I answered I found Pike standing outside with several books in his hand.

"If you haven't anything to do, Andrews," he said hurriedly, "would you mind coming up to my room for a few minutes? It's very important."

"Of course not," I replied. "I'll be right up."

When I opened his door five minutes later he was busy at his desk.

"Sit down," he said, nodding to a chair. "I shall be finished here in a moment."

I took the chair I had occupied that night when first I had realised what a likable chap Pike could be. While he was completing the work on which he was engaged, I took the opportunity to examine him closely. His cheeks were like old parchment and had fallen in so that he looked years older than he was. His jaw and chin were incongruously firm—so firm that I wondered how an habitual "dope-taker" could preserve such evidences of character.

"How much does Wheeler know?" he asked abruptly, setting aside his pen. I knew perfectly well what he meant, though this was the first time since that memorable night that he had ever referred to it.

"Not a thing," I replied. "I made him think he was having a nightmare, and he was so ashamed that he hasn't mentioned the affair to a soul."

"That's good. I can't tell you, Andrews, how much I appreciate your kindness to me. You know, of course, what made me act as I did."

“ Naturally,” I said, remembering the bump he had raised on my forehead. “ I had a sample of your ‘ Coleman’s Hair Tonic ’ examined by a doctor who said it was heroin. Why in the name of common sense do you do it, Pike? You are not a weakling. You have brains and will-power. Why don’t you let the stuff alone before it gets a death-grip on you? ”

“ I have made up my mind to tell you the whole story,” he said, speaking slowly and deliberately. “ You are the only one in the world who will know, and I’m sure I can trust you.”

I nodded without replying.

“ I first became acquainted with dope four years ago at the end of my last year in school. I remember I was ill at the time and a little country doctor gave me some morphine to deaden the pain. While still under the influence of the drug I tried to work. I was astonished to notice that I did my mathematics in about a third of the time it usually took. After that I experimented. In my town lives a relative who keeps a drug-store. Under pretext of experimenting with animals I got samples of all sorts of drugs from hasheesh to morphine.



What I was after was something to sharpen my wits so that I should be brilliant in mathematics. I guess, Andrews," he concluded, "I have had more strange sensations than almost any other man in the world."

"Tell me about some of them," I asked. "I have always wanted to know what it is in drugs that makes slaves of men."

"Well, there are a number of sensations," he replied slowly. "One time I 'blew my burners,' as the saying is, in an anteroom of the Capitol in Washington. When I started to walk down the steps, they seemed a thousand miles long, and they tapered in size from the width of the Potomac at the top to a fine line at the bottom. It was something like the impression one gets when standing close to a skyscraper and looking up, but it was indescribably exhilarating—a feeling of infinite space and infinite power. But the aftermath is horrible. I was recovering from too much heroin when you first came in to see me. I use that drug almost entirely now, since it helps me in my work more than any of the others."

"But haven't you been afraid that you would become a slave to the drug habit? You know what that means as well as I."



"Better than you," was his reply. "But right from the start I have known that I could stop using it whenever I chose. In that respect I am different from most dope-takers."

"Well," he concluded, "that's the story in a nut-shell. After sniffing heroin I can solve problems that I couldn't touch while normal. Incidentally, I have made some original researches trying to prove the existence of a fourth dimension. However, that sort of work probably doesn't interest you."

"Indeed it does; please tell me about it," I begged.

"I'll tell you what I think as plainly as possible," he answered. "Perhaps I can present it to you so that you will admit that this extra dimension may exist either as the ether which fills space or as a dimension which our intellect alone is capable of perceiving. Imagine, if you can, a world with but two dimensions, length and breadth, superimposed on a world of the three dimensions known to us. Then the people of the second world would only perceive the inhabitants of the two-dimensional world when they were either above or below them, since these people would have no thickness. In a similar manner there may

be animate beings right in this room whom we cannot encounter because they make no impression on any of our senses. But this is, of course, mere conjecture. You have worked doubtless in two-dimensional arithmetic, have you not? ”

“ With no very great success,” I answered, nodding.

“ Well, I can prove that four—and even five or six—dimensional arithmetic is possible,” he exclaimed, excitedly. “ I have yet to add the connecting link to my chain of evidence, but I am morally certain that I am on the right trail, and that in ten days I can publish my discovery. It will be the greatest thing in centuries,” he cried, rising from his chair in high nervous tension.

“ But I’ve got to take more heroin to do it,” he added in a voice from which all buoyancy and hope had fled. At the thought his eyes lost their brilliancy and he sank back limply in his chair.

“ I’m afraid of it, Andrews,” he confessed. “ Not so much that it will get a hold on me as that it will drive me insane. Do you know, sometimes I wake in the night with the horrible feeling that my mind is slipping and that I am on the verge of being a raving maniac.

God, Andrews! You can't imagine what torture it is. But I'll finish my work and then I'll stop forever."

"But you don't mean to say, Pike, that you are going to take any more chances with dope. Let the work go for a while. You can get it finished later on when you are feeling better."

"I'll think it over," he replied, but I could see that his mind was made up and that nothing could keep him from carrying out his intention.

For two days I did not see him. Then one night I was awakened by feeling him tugging at my shoulder.

"I've found it," he whispered excitedly. "Come upstairs and I'll tell you about it."

I got up and wrapped a bath-robe about me. Then we went to Pike's room.

"Won't my dad be proud, eh?" he asked, speaking more to himself than to me. "He's a judge down in Maine, and it's always been his ambition that I should achieve distinction in something, he doesn't care what. Won't he be pleased when he sees this in the papers!"

"But damn that fellow Brown, Andrews!" he cried, interrupting the thread of his monologue. "I shall fix him for not letting me build clay houses. I had the coffin all ready—all

set out with two sticks crossed in the middle, and he broke it, he broke it . . . ”

“ Here, here, Pike,” I broke in sharply, alarmed both by his senseless jargon and the madman’s glare in his eyes. “ What are you drooling about? If you intend showing me the proof of the fourth dimension, get busy and do so. I’m not going to shiver here all night while you rehash your youthful tribulations.”

Besides being frightened, I was also annoyed at being dragged from bed in the middle of a night very cold for the season.

“ Yes, yes, quite right,” he answered; “ but somehow I can’t seem to remember what it was I was going to tell you. Wait a minute.”

He went into the bedroom and returned in a moment with a bottle, seemingly oblivious of my presence. With a shaking hand he removed the stopper, spilling some of the powder as he did so. After several efforts he succeeded in pouring a pinch or two in the hollow of his left hand between the thumb and fingers. This he sniffed into his nostrils as if he were taking snuff.

“ Ah, now I feel better,” he said, turning to me. “ Well, for two days now I have been working on the weak spot in my proof. Haven’t

touched bed once. To-night I was almost ready to give up. Tired out and nervous, as you see. Finally, however, I recalled a little-known treatise on Gozzaldi's 'Theory of Shadows' which I ran across several years ago. The mathematical principles worked out by the author were exactly what I needed. I haven't yet put them on paper, but the hard work is done. Now I can rest."

His eyes closed and he sank back wearily in his chair. Immediately he was alert again.

"Who are they!" he whispered hoarsely, clutching my arm. "They're coming! Good God, Andrews! Do you think they know about it already and are coming to steal it? Brown is there. I know his voice." (His own voice was now rising to a shriek.) "Hear him. He told them not to let me make mud cakes with him."

"Hush, be quiet," I begged. "No one is coming. Here take some brandy and you will feel better."

"I hear them, I tell you," he screamed, "and they're coming from all sides. Let me go."

True enough, doors were now opening and closing in the hall and we could hear the excited

voices of men asking what the row was all about.

I tried to hold Pike in his chair but he broke from me and dashed cursing about the room. A Japanese vase containing flowers was standing on the window-sill. Pike picked it up easily, although it weighed twenty-five pounds, and sent it crashing into the chandelier. Next he seized his manuscript and tore it into a thousand pieces which he threw on the floor and stamped upon.

By this time the door was opened by a crowd of men in pajamas or bath-robcs. Together we managed to subdue Pike while someone went for a doctor.

The minute he saw Pike, the physician looked very grave.

"I'm sorry to tell you, gentlemen," he said after a short examination, "that it looks as if he had reached the goal towards which all 'dope fiends' are travelling. With good care he'll live through this, but his mind is probably wrecked for good."

WILLIAM E. SHEA.

# THE SIX TWENTIES







## THE SIX TWENTIES

“’M SORRY, Sir,” apologised the waiter, “but the cashier won’t accept this twenty-dollar bill. She says a warning has just been sent out by the police to be on the watch for counterfeit twenties.”

“Duke” Devlin, as his custom was on such occasions, immediately became indignant, and insisted upon seeing the head-waiter. That autocrat of the dining-room disclaimed all authority over the cashier. He could assure Monsieur, however, that there was no question of Monsieur’s honor, but that it was purely a matter of business prudence. Satisfied, then, that he had given the desired impression of insulted respectability, Devlin paid for his luncheon with some small bills and without further protest left the restaurant.

By profession Devlin was a passer of counterfeit money. He did not make the stuff himself; his task was to exchange it for govern-

ment money. His associates called him the "Duke" in recognition of the one great advantage which he possessed over them. This was the ability to look and act like a gentleman—an ability not natural to Devlin, but the result of painstaking observation and imitation. He had early recognised that such an appearance of respectability was a great asset in his trade; and, drawing his models from the stage, the hotel lobby, and the Avenue, he had so trained himself that he easily passed unquestioned in the many fashionable restaurants, which constituted his chief field of activity. And so in the character of a rich young New Yorker he could visit expensive places of entertainment, and there present bills of large denominations without danger of rousing suspicion. Moreover, his ability at a crisis to assume an air of honest innocence had helped him out of many a tight place.

Devlin had already suffered three setbacks in one day. After a week of unusual luck in his attempt to pass several thousand dollars of counterfeit "twenties," he had met a sudden check. Thanks to his own activity and skill, the market had become flooded; the police were aroused; and a warning had been issued

to the public to beware of fresh, clean, twenty-dollar notes.

By this time, however, Devlin had rid himself of all his bills but six. These six were almost as dangerous to carry about as nitroglycerine, and as for passing them, he had found it next to impossible. But Duke Devlin had not a little professional pride, and in spite of—perhaps on account of—the warnings and gloomy predictions of his partners in crime, he determined to keep at it till his last “twenty” was gone. Accordingly, as he left the restaurant, his mind was busy seeking some new field. The fashionable eating-places of Fifth Avenue and the “Lobster Palaces” of Broadway had heretofore sufficed for his purpose. Now it was evident that intensive cultivation had destroyed the fecundity of this formerly rich ground.

As he strolled up Fifth Avenue, Devlin’s eye was attracted to a display of hats and canes in the window of a popular hatter. Here, he thought, was a place he had never tried. Accordingly he turned, entered the shop, and began to look over the stock of walking-sticks. Finally he selected one and handed a twenty-dollar bill in payment. The clerk took it and passed to the back of the store, ostensibly to

get some change. As Devlin pretended to adjust his tie in a convenient mirror, he saw the reflection of the clerk, who was carefully examining the bill under an electric light. The latter then abruptly entered a small private office, and Devlin, turning quickly, detected his shadow on the ground glass pane of the door, as he reached up to take down a telephone receiver.

This was enough for Devlin. In imagination he pictured the police sergeant as he received the message, and the two plain clothes men, as they hurriedly left the station. Although he wanted to run, he compelled himself to stroll quietly out on the Avenue. Here he turned the corner, and walked rapidly eastward in the direction of Madison Avenue. He had succeeded in getting rid of one of the six bills, but not just in the manner he had hoped. And five yet remained to be disposed of.

"There's nothing to it," he finally decided. "New York is getting too wise for me. I guess I'll have to skip over to Brooklyn and experiment on the natives—only I don't think they ever saw a twenty over there and, if I flashed one, I might get pinched for an absconding cashier. No, I've got it. I'll go up to the

Bronx. It'll only cost me a nickel, and I can work some of the road-houses up there."

To the mind of a native of Manhattan Island the inhabitants of the Bronx, as well as those of Brooklyn and Hoboken, are notorious "hicks." Moreover, because of the wealthy motorists who stop at its many road-houses, the Bronx was especially fitted for Devlin's purpose. He lost no time, therefore, in acting upon this inspiration, and the elevated railroad was soon rattling him along between the house-tops of upper New York.

Devlin had a considerable acquaintance among the garage men of the theatre district, and several times he had been included in nocturnal "joy rides." On one of these he remembered stopping at a road-house not far from the station of the Elevated, and this house he determined to visit first.

The Heathcote Arms is one of a number of small inns on the outskirts of the city, to which the fashionable are accustomed to motor for tea in the afternoon, and the not so fashionable for dinner and midnight supper. Formerly a country mansion of some elegance, it had been deserted by its original owner, when the City had announced its intention of turning the vast

Lorillard estate into a public park. It stood, a tall, square, gambrel-roofed building, in the centre of about three acres of lawn. It was surrounded by a number of tall old trees, which, in some of their drooping branches, gave evidence of approaching decay. Along the driveway were parked a number of automobiles, ranging from the humble taxi-cab to the Limousine de Luxe.

To approach this hostelry on foot was almost to invite suspicion. In Devlin's case, however, there was no help for it, and once past the contemptuous eyes of the door-man, he had no difficulty in mingling unnoticed with the crowd of respectable tea-drinkers in the large glass-enclosed dining-room. Here he selected one of the small tables ranged along the wall, and true to his instinct of imitation, looked about to see what his neighbors were eating. The prevailing choice seemed to be tea, toast, and marmalade; and although this combination filled him with disgust, he decided that he had best follow his neighbors' example. When the waiter had gone for his order, he lit a cigarette and looked about him more leisurely.

In one corner a uniformed boy presided over a large phonograph, which provided the music



that a true New Yorker demands with his meals. The people eating and listening to the music were for the most part elderly, prosperous and self-contented, and uninteresting. Facing him, however, at a small table next in line with his own, sat one quite different—a young girl alone, decidedly pretty, and fashionably though modestly dressed. Although she was unescorted Devlin immediately set her down in his mind for a “swell,” as she quietly and unobtrusively sipped her tea. As he covertly watched her, Devlin was conscious of a vague dissatisfaction with the part he played in life. He felt himself superior both in taste and intellect to the people with whom he usually associated, and he told himself that he was the equal of any man in the room. Nevertheless, the companionship of a refined, cultivated girl, like this one, was something he had never had, and probably never should have.

While Devlin was engaged in these reflections, and before his own order had arrived, the girl opposite had finished her tea, and paid her check with a single large bill. A moment later the waiter returned with the same bill and seemed to be apologising. Glancing up, the girl saw that Devlin was watching her, and

gave some order to the waiter. He immediately came over to Devlin and explained that the young lady had only a hundred-dollar bill, and that the cashier had found herself unable to change it. Consequently the young lady wished to ask the gentleman if he would change it for her, as she did not wish to leave her name with the head-waiter.

Devlin could hardly believe his good fortune. Here at last was an answer to both his wishes. He might now at one stroke rid himself of his five remaining counterfeit bills and speak to the girl who had so attracted him, without fear of offending her. He took the bill from the waiter's hand and stepped to her table. Then he bowed in his best manner, borrowed from John Drew, and handed her his counterfeit change, at the same time murmuring how delighted he was to be able to do her this slight service.

She thanked him graciously and, when the waiter was gone, she asked him to sit down and have his tea brought to her table. She was alone, she explained, and had become terribly bored with her own company. Although this was the opportunity for which he had hoped, Devlin was not a little surprised at the invitation. He hastened to accept, however, and

seated himself opposite to her. Then, in order to start the conversation, he told her how his motor car had broken down on the road from the city, and how he had been compelled to cover the remaining short distance on foot.

"What a pity!" she exclaimed. "I should hate that. But then, you see, it could never happen to me. Papa always buys me a new car every year, and so there is positively no danger of the horrid thing breaking down. And then, too, Henri is an expert mechanic, and I know he would die of mortification if I should ever have to walk an inch. That is my car there. You can see it out of this window."

She pointed to a large, gray touring-car drawn up at the side of the driveway. The chauffeur, in maroon livery, sat at the wheel, and near the door stood a footman, holding a fur rug folded over his arm.

As Devlin recognised all these signs of affluence, he felt somehow relieved in conscience. For some moments he had been inwardly despising himself for having so shamefully deceived this beautiful and trusting girl. Now he realised that the hundred dollars he had swindled her out of was a mere trifle. Nevertheless, he could not help wondering what

she would think of him when she discovered that the bills he had given her were counterfeits. He wished he hadn't passed them. Would she accuse him, or would she think that he himself had been the victim of some skilful criminal? Anyway, he determined to make the best of this brief episode in his life, and cast about in his mind for some topic with which to prolong this charming tête-à-tête. But none would present itself except his particular interest of the moment.

"It was a risky thing for you to do," he said, "to accept change for so large a bill from a stranger. Just now there's a bunch of 'queer' money afloat, and the boys that pass it work everywhere."

"Oh, they wouldn't dare come to a place like this," she protested confidently. "Besides, I'm sure I should find no difficulty in detecting such a horrid person by his appearance. At least, I think I know a gentleman when I see one."

Duke Devlin flushed with pleasure at this delicate compliment, and yet he felt that he must defend his profession. "I am told," he remonstrated, "that some of these men look very much like gentlemen. I've heard about

them from a detective I know. And then you mustn't think that the job is a cinch. A successful passer of the ' queer '—that's what they call counterfeit money, you know—has to be brave, as well as smart. His nerves must be as cool as a baseball pitcher's, because he is always in danger of being found out, and a cool bluff will often save him. He's got to be husky, too, or he couldn't stand the strain."

Devlin's companion seemed to find a lively interest in his words. " Oh, how thrilling it must all be! " she exclaimed. " I never thought of it in that way before. You can't imagine how a girl in my position craves excitement of some sort. Hemmed in on all sides by conventions, one's life becomes terrifically tiresome. Of course we have dances and things, but they are always the same. The men are either stupid or silly, and persist in treating a girl as if she was made just to look pretty. Oh, sometimes I revolt against it all, and drive the family nearly crazy. Mother would be simply frantic if she saw me talking to a perfectly strange man in a perfectly strange restaurant; and I suppose you, too, thought I was dreadfully bold, when I asked you to sit down with me."

Devlin of course protested that no such

thought had ever occurred to him. Then, encouraged by her evident interest, he told her stories of his own exciting adventures as a counterfeiter, stories which he explained he had learned in connection with his work on one of the great metropolitan papers.

"But how," she asked him once, "can you tell a counterfeit note when you get one? I should think it would be almost impossible. But then I suppose it is like the way people in a bank can always tell a forgery."

"Oh, yes, it's easy enough," he answered. "The advantage—I mean the trouble is that most people never take the trouble to learn how. Most people look at the paper or at the vignettes, and these are the things it's easiest to imitate. Everything, in fact, on the national currency note can be copied, except the fine lathe-engraved lines that make up the background of a bill. It isn't possible for any steel-engraver to imitate this machine-work by hand, and I don't care how good he is. If you could photograph them, then it would be a cinch; but the government prints them green to prevent that. Now take this note of yours, for instance—"

As Devlin reached for his wallet, in which

he had placed her hundred-dollar bill, his companion, glancing at her wrist-watch, interrupted him.

"I've enjoyed this immensely," she said. "It was all frightfully interesting; but I'm afraid I must go now, or the family will be wild with anxiety about me. You see I really am a slave to convention, after all. I do hope, however, that you will let me give you a lift to town, unless your own car has been fixed up."

Devlin hastened to accept this further kindness, saying that he had kept a careful look-out and had not seen his car arrive, and adding, for the sake of realism, that he intended to discharge his chauffeur that night.

"Oh, but perhaps it wasn't the poor fellow's fault at all, you know. We may meet him with the car all ready on the way back to the city. I must go now and get my fur coat and fix my veil. If you will wait here for me, I'll be back in a moment."

She left Devlin to smoke another cigarette and to congratulate himself on his good fortune. But then it wasn't all luck, he thought. Part of it was due to his own cleverness and personality. If he had not been clever, he should never have thought of going so far afield as the



Bronx, and, if he had not been of an engaging personality, his fair companion would never have ventured to trust him to such an extent. Nor would she have needed to, for surely the management would have trusted one of her evident wealth and respectability. Then, too, what a laugh he would have over the gloomy predictions of the rest of the bunch, when he returned with the last of his counterfeit bills turned into good United States money! Of course he had lost one of them in the hat store, but then that accident must be reckoned among the exigencies of his somewhat precarious profession.

So pleasing were these reflections that Devlin failed to notice that the moment named by his new friend had already stretched to at least fifteen minutes. In fact, he might have continued to sit there for another quarter of an hour, had his attention not been attracted by a movement among the automobiles on the drive. The handsome gray touring-car, which she had pointed out to him as her own, rolled silently up to the entrance; the footman opened the door of the tonneau; a fat old gentleman and his equally stout wife climbed heavily in; and then the car glided away in the direction of the city.

For an instant Devlin sat dazed; but only for an instant. Then he jumped to his feet and passed quickly into the hall. Here he called one of the pages and asked him a brief question.

"The lady you was sittin' with didn't go to the coat-room at all, Sir," the boy replied. "She went out the side entrance and walked off in the direction of the Elevated. She came that way, too, Sir," he added.

Speechless Devlin went back and paid his own check, and then hurriedly left the restaurant in the direction she had taken. As soon as he had passed out of sight round a curve in the road he stopped and, drawing her hundred-dollar bill from his wallet, he examined it under a small pocket glass.

"Stung!" he muttered and threw the bill with an oath to the road. In a moment, however, his face cleared and he stooped to pick it up again. As he replaced it in his wallet, he exclaimed aloud: "I'll be damned if it wasn't worth it!"

GEORGE C. SMITH, JR.



# THE BALANCE





## THE BALANCE

“ELL, Elsie, one more sunset and it will all be over.”

She looked up with a quick smile at the well-built man leaning beside her on the rail of the promenade deck.

“Do you think life ends with a honeymoon, then?” she asked. “And just because we land in New York the day after tomorrow, ‘all will be over?’”

“Of course I don’t, silly,” he replied, “I was referring merely to the honeymoon—so termed.”

“It *has* been just too glorious,” she answered and paused; “but I think it’s time Dr. Paul Standish got to work and his wife tried her hand at housekeeping, don’t you?”

“You’re right,” he said, “as you usually are. We’ve played long enough. And I have before me one of the greatest tasks that ever confronted a man. And, Elsie, it’s nearly completed. It can’t be long now. Do you

realise what a cure for tuberculosis will mean to this world? Can you imagine what it will mean to lift that horror from humanity for good and all? And I'm going to do it, too. You know how I've worked, worked all my life to get my education and to get a position where I could experiment. It has taken me years, long hard years, with trials that you, who have always had everything, can never guess. But that's all past; I've won a position where I have the opportunity to perfect this cure—and I'm going to do it!"

"And I want to help—if I can," she added softly, with an admiring glance.

"You know how you can help," he replied; "just love me."

Paul regarded Elsie with eyes of wonder. Her unswerving devotion to ideals fascinated him. He, too, had his ideals, but they were more practical than hers; his life had necessitated that. She was so young, so eager, so trusting! But her confidence in him, he felt, was not the blind confidence of youth. He had been tested and watched to see if he came up to these ideals of hers, and apparently in her eyes he did.

They stood silently for a long time, wrapped



in their own reflections, and watching with unseeing eyes the huge squat bow of the "Cræsus" rise and fall in the long ground swells. The sun went down, and the chill of night began to steal into the air. Elsie with a laugh and a tug at her husband's arm said:

"Come, dear, we've been standing here for hours dreaming like a couple of children. It's time to dress. Come on!"

It was not until late that evening that they finally turned in. The sea was somewhat rougher than it had been in the afternoon, but the long, slow pitching of the boat did not trouble them and both were soon asleep.

It must have been several hours later when they were awakened by a pounding on their door. There were sounds of general confusion, women were sobbing, and a strong odor of smoke filled the room. It required but a second for them to realise that the boat was on fire! Just how serious it might be they could not tell, but the noise outside seemed to be increasing. Paul reached for the switch and snapped the lights on.

"Now, Elsie," he said, "keep a grip on yourself. This may be bad or it may be nothing. At any rate, don't act like that." He jerked

his head in the direction from which hysterical shrieks were coming. "Get into some clothes. Pumps, not shoes, and a coat you can slip out of easily. Take all the money and jewelry in your pocket."

His matter-of-fact tone calmed her panic. Her face was white and her lips were trembling, but she quickly did as he told her.

From all quarters came confused sounds. The boat was quivering with the throb of the pumps. Sharp commands rang out above the din.

Suddenly the lights in their room went out and left, not darkness, but a ghastly orange glare filtering in from somewhere. At nearly the same moment they heard the sharp hiss of water as it struck the flames.

"Quick now, dear," said Paul. Seizing his wife by the wrist he stepped into the corridor with her. A terrified line of people was pushing forward through the smoke. The calm and almost cheerful voice of an officer came ringing down the corridor.

"Up for'ard, quick. There's no danger at present. Please pass up for'ard."

It was extraordinary what an effect that voice had. It stood for discipline, and its quiet

force brought courage back to the half panic-stricken passengers.

Somehow they reached the boat deck, and stood for a moment almost fascinated by the unreal splendor of the scene. The stern of the boat was blotted out in a solid column of dense orange smoke. Silhouetted against this were a swaying mass of people. Behind them were the men who were standing grimly in the fierce heat, fighting with hose and water to save these hundreds of lives. As they watched, the smoke grew even denser, and then with a roar and an upheaval of glowing sparks and cinders, the flame burst through the deck and shot its lurid column to the sky.

It was a question of minutes now. The boats were being rapidly filled and lowered into the glowing sea below. Paul fought his way through the throng to a boat already half full and lifted Elsie in. His heart was beating madly and his breath coming in sobs. She flung her arms about his neck, but he pushed her back after one embrace.

“Good-bye, dear. I’ll come if I can. Keep your courage up and do what you can to help,” he whispered, and left her to aid a hysterical woman.

In a second more the boat was being swung out over the side. A dull calm had swept over Elsie. She felt herself careless of what might happen now. But it did not last long. Why, oh why had she left Paul? He was going to burn to death or drown! She stood up and flung her arms out to the burning steamer, her brain in a turmoil; but a rough hand pulled her down and she sat cowering in her place, her body shaking with sobs. In a vague way she was aware that the boat had been lowered into the water and was resting, nose into the long waves, some two hundred yards from the steamer. She could not bear to look at it and turned her eyes to the occupants of the life-boat. With the exception of the crew and two sobbing men, the boat was crowded with children and women.

Then it came upon her all at once—the glory of sacrifice! On that floating Hell men were dying that they, that *she* might live! In the final test her husband had lived up to the standard. The words, “Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friend,” flashed into her mind. And his own last words came back to her: “Good-bye, dear, I’ll come if I can. Keep your courage up, and

do what you can to help." She felt herself carried away by a feeling of happy agony. She turned her eyes back to the steamer. They were jumping off now, but it meant inevitable death. No man could live long in that sea! Suddenly her eyes caught the figure of Paul standing by the last life-boat on that side. He was fighting back crazed men and putting a woman into the boat. Fascinated she watched. The boat seemed full. Another woman was clinging to Paul's arm. For a second he stood motionless. Then with a quick gesture he pushed her back and sprang into the life-boat himself!

A surge of horror swept over Elsie. She slipped from her seat unconscious.

\* \* \* \* \*

Elsie slowly opened her eyes, but quickly shut them, for the glare of the morning light hurt. Then the memory of the night flashed over her. She vaguely wondered where she was, but cared little. Her body ached and her head throbbed, but worst of all in her heart was a sensation of utter despair. Her world lay crumbled. There was nothing left. The horror of what she had seen her husband do grew upon her moment by moment. If he

could only have died like a man instead of living like a, like a—her heart said coward, and she quivered with the bitterness of it.

At last she looked about. She was lying on a mattress in what was apparently the lounge of a small liner. Around her were others, like herself lying prostrate, wrapped in blankets. Stewards, a doctor, and several capable-looking women were doing what they could to make it easier for the victims of the disaster. She gathered that the wireless had saved them and that they had been picked up during the night. As she moved, a woman came to her with hot broth and a cheerful word, but Elsie could only shake her head and close her eyes. After a time she fell again into a troubled sleep.

When next she wakened she looked up into the face of Paul. His eyes were filled with tears as he bent over her and said in a broken voice:

“Thank God, Elsie, you are safe.”

“Don’t! Don’t!” she cried, putting her clenched fists in her eyes as he bent to kiss her. “Go away, Paul! I can never look at you again. Oh, how could you do such a thing?”

For a moment he thought she was out of her mind. Then he gradually realised what she

meant—what she had seen. The joy left his heart. He looked down at her shaking body and the hopeless pain in her face, and knew that her sense of honor was stronger than her love.

“Paul,” she sobbed, “I can’t live with the horror that is stifling me. When I saw you take the place that woman should have had—” her words cut into his heart—“I—I—don’t you see? The man I loved was a—a—a coward.” She ended in a broken whisper. He rose and paced back and forth in the small state-room where she lay now. His face was white, and drawn into harsh lines.

“Elsie,” he said in a dull voice, “you’ve called me a coward—I’m not going to make excuses. That’s not my way. I did take a place in the boat which that stewardess might have had. But I did not do it out of cowardice.”

“Then why—why did you do it?” she asked, looking at him with wide and pleading eyes.

“I did it,” he went on, scarcely seeming aware of the huddled figure in the berth, “I did it out of selfishness.”

“Selfishness?” she whispered.

“Yes, selfishness,” he cried turning fiercely toward her. “Good God, don’t you know me well enough to know I’m not a coward? I



did it deliberately—just as I planned to do from the moment the thing began. I stayed and did what I could to help, but I felt that I had as good a right as anyone else to live my life. I didn't save myself in a frightened, cowardly panic. You know that!"

"That doesn't change what you did," she answered in a hopeless voice.

"Of course it doesn't," he said; "I told you I'm not trying to crawl. I did it deliberately because I thought my life was worth more than that woman's."

"Who are you to judge your life in the balance with another's?" she said, her eyes flashing with scorn.

"Who are you," he replied, "to judge me? You who allowed yourself to be saved? Why didn't you stay and die that some man who had done something for the world, and still could help the world, might live? Have you a better right to live than those men?"

"Those men chose to sacrifice themselves because they were *men*." Her voice was ringing with conviction now. "They did not stop to figure out the petty value of their own lives. They did the only noble, the only honorable thing. They laid down their lives for others!"

“Do you think it was right,” he retorted quickly, “that those men who had positions of responsibility in the world, and people dependent on them, should give up their lives that others far less useful than they should live?”

“Do you think that my life is less valuable to the world than that of a stewardess? Have you forgotten that I have given my life to a greater cause than dying to save one—that of living to help hundreds? Have you forgotten that my life has been devoted to a work to aid humanity and relieve human suffering, and that if I had died last night, the world would have lost the secret of the cure which I alone possess? Don’t you think it is my duty to *live*?”

“No,” she said slowly, “sacrifice is duty always. The world’s judgment has always said so. Wait and see.”

“The world may persist in its illusions, beautiful and mad as they are, but I am certain in my heart of my right to live,” he responded almost humbly. “Yet if life is to be this, it is ten thousand times worse than a death I did not fear.” He sank into a chair and dropped his head into his hands.

She looked at him without pity. What use were arguments or wishes? She felt strangely

incapable of emotion now that he realised how she felt. She only wanted to be left alone and to let time ease her shame as best it could.

"It's all over," she said wearily. "Nothing can change it. I want you to go."

He rose and stood before her.

"Elsie, you're overwrought now," he said gently; "you've said a lot of things you don't mean. I think that in a few days matters may look differently. Until then, well, try to think of it as little as you can. I'm going, as you want me to, but I'll come back to-morrow."

He stepped out and carefully closed the door.

The next afternoon Paul was pacing up and down the deck of the steamer which had come to their aid. He had gone over in his mind the harrowing details of the situation until he felt nearly insane. There had been only thirty-two lives lost, for this boat had come up within two hours of the time the first wireless message had been despatched, and had contrived to get off most of the people left on the burning "Croesus" after her life-boats had all been lowered. Most of those who had perished had jumped into the sea. One thought alone kept his courage up. The stewardess whom he might have saved had survived. He did not

know how she had reached safety, but he had, after long searching, discovered her sitting on a lower deck, safe and talking with a group of friends. He was hoping against hope that this fact might change Elsie's determination. If only she could see that his action had made no difference, that it was partly because of his great love for her and partly because he honestly believed that he had a better right to live, that he had saved himself! He felt no anger toward the girl who had called him a coward; he had only a dull, blind hope that she might be able to justify him in her heart. He did not want her to forgive him; that would only mean that the ghost of the deed would always be between them, and that it might drive away the love now strong enough to reunite them. He realised that his only chance lay in convincing her that his action was justifiable. He thought again and again of the bitter conversation they had had the day before; and his heart ached that such words could have come between them. He must, he told himself a thousand times, he *must* justify himself in her eyes; therein lay his sole salvation.

That evening Elsie sent for him. With his heart beating heavily and his hand trembling,

he knocked at the door of her room. After he had entered, one glance at her white, determined face made him fear that his quest was useless.

"I sent for you," said Elsie quite calmly, "because we have got to come to some understanding."

"Elsie," said Paul firmly, "do you realise what you are doing? If you keep up this attitude both our lives will be wrecked. I love you, and you love me. You can't deny that."

He paused, and looked at her. She lay motionless in her berth, her face inexpressive.

"I don't ask you to forgive me," he went on; "I ask you to try to look the matter squarely in the face. When we talked the other day we were both more or less hysterical; we've got to look at it calmly now. Will you hear me out?"

She nodded, so he resumed his plea.

"First of all, I am a man who has been and can be of service to the world. My life is essential to mankind because I am on the eve of completing a discovery of a wonderful cure. I am not a coward. My act was the result of a logical conviction, in which, however you may feel, I remain in my own eyes justified.

"Secondly, you are judging me according to

ideals which you have built up out of a life that has known nothing of the struggle of the world. How do you know that your ideals are right? How do you know that you are not, out of a blind devotion to unjust creeds, ruining my life as well as your own? Have you any more right to do this than I had to do as I did?

“ And finally, though this is no justification, the woman was saved. I don’t know how, but I saw her this morning, safe and unhurt.

“ There has been no harm done, my action is justifiable in my own eyes. Have you any right to ruin us both because of a mere question of gallantry? Had it been a man instead of a woman, you would have thanked God I had survived, instead of calling me what you did. Again I ask you to look at the question squarely. Have you the right to wreck both our lives? ”

“ Paul,” she answered sadly, “ I would to God you could convince me, but you can’t; whether the woman lived or died makes no difference. It is the principle of the thing: you failed to do what a noble man should; you failed to give up your life to rescue a woman. You know I did not want to see you die, but I

had rather see you die honorably than live—dishonorably.” She stood out bravely for her convictions. “You have been my idol; now you are shattered. I can never be content with a piece of my idol. It has to be all or none. Don’t you see we can never live together with this awful thing between us?”

They were silent for a moment, and then he said quietly:

“I suppose you will want a divorce;” he saw her quiver at the word; “if you insist, it can doubtless be secured. But I want to make one request of you. I think you are deciding this matter too quickly. Why can we not simply live apart for a year, and see if we then feel the same way? Don’t you think that is just?”

After a moment’s thought she nodded.

“Then we will simply live apart for a year before we take any more definite steps?”

“For a year,” she answered.

\* \* \* \* \*

Through the open window came a faint, warm breeze. It whispered of a summer to come, and, somehow, even though it blew across the vast city, suggested an odor of growing things, of flowers.

Dr. Paul Standish, the man who in a brief



seven months after his escape from the "Cræsus" disaster, had astounded New York by the discovery of a cure for tuberculosis which had brought him prayers of infinite gratitude from a suffering world, lay pallid and motionless, little caring whether the breeze that blew into his tiny white hospital room promised summer or not. He had worked day and night, neglecting himself entirely in a passionate attempt to forget the past and to justify his existence. And then he had suddenly collapsed, and for two days had lain so ill that the doctors shook their heads over his case.

He knew even better than they that he was not far from death. A grim fatalism had seized him and he lay careless of whether he lived or died. Gradually after his separation from his wife, the morbid conviction grew upon him that he had been a coward. The belief that he had been justified had been shattered. He saw himself only cynically. What had his life been but sordid ambition for prominence and prestige? Had these motives not been far stronger in him than a love of humanity? And if they had, where was his justification? Over and over in his mind he turned the bitter arguments until, humbled and despondent,

in a fury of desire to make up for the past, he plunged into his work heart and soul. Thoughtless of himself, fearless and desperate, he accomplished under the spur of his shame what seemed impossible. The world was ringing with his name and achievements. No man could stand that pace for long; and here he lay at last utterly broken. He felt his strength slipping from him, and although he realised that with effort and determination he could win it back, he did not try. Until Elsie could justify him, he could never justify himself. And so if he could but go quietly away from it all—

Over next the window, a trim-looking nurse was absorbed in an afternoon paper which reported the condition of her patient and told how he was living apart from his wife who was at her father's home in Boston. Presently she crossed over and gave his pillow an unnecessary but kindly little pat. He smiled wanly up at her and said, "You are very good to me, Miss Smith."

"Who wouldn't be to so famous a patient?" she answered with a little laugh, which sobered quickly enough when she saw that the old look of suffering was coming back on his face.

Soon she ventured another remark.

"There's a new nurse coming on duty at half past four."

He made no reply, and she added: "I hope you'll like her."

Presently he drowsed off to sleep, and Miss Smith tiptoed quietly out.

When he awoke, dusk was just beginning to settle over the city. He was thirsty and about to ask Miss Smith for a drink, when he remembered that this slim figure in the nurse's uniform standing at the window was a new nurse.

"I beg your pardon," he began.

The girl started and turned toward him.

"Elsie, Elsie!" he cried with an incredulous joy in his tone, "you—you have come."

He held out his arms and she bent down and kissed his worn face.

"You came back to me, Elsie. Oh, how I've longed for you! I couldn't have stood it much longer, but you came back to me!"

She slipped to her knees beside his bed and pressed his hot hand against her cheek.

"Yes, dear," she said gently, "I've come back and I'm never going again. I love you too much. But Paul, you were right; I had to justify you in my own eyes and I've done it."

Her face glowed with the joy of honest belief in the worth of her husband. "You have done enough for the world, to clear yourself a thousand times over. Look at the lives you have saved and can save. If you had not been so worthy, I could never have looked at the thing as I now do. What have I ever done to set myself up as superior to you? Why should any woman assume that she has a better right to live than a man? Oh Paul! I've been so wrong, and you've been so splendid, giving up your very life and soul that others might have their way made easier through the world! And to think that I deserted you! Can you ever, ever forgive me?"

She buried her head in her arms, kneeling there at his bedside, and sobbed.

Paul reached out his hand and placed it on her soft hair.

"Forgive you, Elsie?" he replied. "Why—why, it's you who have forgiven me."

"I have not forgiven you," she answered, lifting her eyes proudly to his. "There is nothing to forgive. You have been weighed in the balance and *not* found wanting."

\* \* \* \* \*

Some time later the door opened and a plump

little doctor stepped in. He paused for a moment, beaming through his spectacles and rubbing his hands softly together, before he murmured to himself:

“One of the best nurses I have ever seen! Emphatically so!”

RICHARD B. SOUTHGATE.



# THE GRIP OF THE TROPICS







## THE GRIP OF THE TROPICS



THROUGH a window of his plantation house, which stood among the fields of hemp in the island of Mindanao, Richard Wallace could see his little Philippino wife, Manuela, lighting the lamps. When he entered the house she left a lamp she was beginning to trim, and pattered in her loose-fitting slippers into the hall.

“Ricardo!” she exclaimed, feigning anger, “you are a naughty *niño* not to have come directly to the house when you returned from Zamboanga. Juan told me that when you left the launch you strolled along the beach. Your little Manuela has been so lonely!”

He bent over and kissed the little brown butterfly, looking at her in such a strange way that she asked: “Did you get a letter from your *familia* in America? And do they want you to return?” Her last question was asked in a startled little voice.

“Don’t bother your head about them.

Parents are always anxious to see their children," Wallace answered, rather confused.

"But you won't go? Tell me! You won't go?" she queried frantically.

"Nonsense, Manuela!" and he left her standing in the middle of the hall looking in some alarm after him.

On entering the little room he called his office, Wallace slammed the door behind him, and threw himself into a wicker chair. Then he took a letter from his pocket and read it several times. Dropping the letter into his lap, he rocked quickly to and fro. Suddenly on the evening breeze which drifted in through the open window came the monotonous "Bung-boong-boong, bung-boong-boong" of the tom-toms from a neighboring Moro village. "Oh, if I could only get away from that, too!" he exclaimed. Seizing the letter again, he re-read the last paragraphs:

"You have been five years away from home in those hot, sweltering Philippines! Think of it—five whole years on a desolate plantation with only natives as your companions; and a village of Moros, who hate all Christians, only three miles away! Surely you can spare yourself a few months' vacation. Do come home!

We must see you! If it were not for the thirty-day sea trip—you know how desperately ill I am at sea—I should go out to you.

“What you told me about a Moro’s believing that if he kills a Christian, he’ll go to Heaven on a white horse and have eight pretty girls to wait on him there, was most interesting; but I should think the Christian Philipinos and you Americans would have to be always on the *qui vive*.

“With best of love,

“Mother.”

Slowly Wallace replaced the letter in his pocket and muttered:

“I *would* go home on the next steamer, if I thought I’d have the nerve to come back!”

He drew his chair up to the window. Resting his elbows on the sill and his chin in his hands, he looked vacantly out over the hemp trees swaying in the breeze, and beyond them, over an expanse of water, now dusky in the dim light of closing day. His thoughts went rambling back to the day he left the States. He wished that he had done as his father had wanted him to do when he had graduated from college. But he was not willing to begin at the bottom in his father’s silk-mill, and work up,

thus learning the business thoroughly. It seemed now a trivial thing to have quarreled over.

And that quarrel had caused so much trouble and unhappiness! He remembered when he told Alicia, to whom he was all but engaged, that on account of a falling out with his father he was going away to start in business for himself—going to the Philippines to be a planter of hemp. He thought he could almost hear the little cry she gave at the word Philippines—they were so far away from East Hamilton, Massachusetts. And he recalled how, with the last good-bye, it was understood that when he had made a success, or was well on the road to it, he would return for her, and she would be waiting for him.

But how differently everything had turned out! In reminiscence he went over his first years in the Islands. How quickly the first four or five months on the plantation, which he had named Buena Suerte, or Good Luck, had passed; how, as the months began to slip by, he found it harder and harder to do things, and how the climate seemed to take most of his energy from him! He recalled the hours he used to pass each day thinking of home and

Alicia, and the pleasure he obtained from the trips to Zamboanga, twenty miles down the coast, where he could talk to Americans. They would always speak longingly of the time when they expected "to go back—" that everlasting and consoling, "When I go back to the States."

Then he remembered how "wet-blanketed" his hopes were at the end of the first year, when Buena Suerte barely paid for its upkeep. Alicia had offered to come out to the Philippines and marry him, if he so desired. Regretfully he recalled that he had written her rather a severe letter, in which he told her he could take care of his affairs without a woman's assistance; and that, after this letter, their correspondence began to fall off. He cursed himself for his temper.

Then Wallace thought of the first time he saw Manuela. She was squatting on a rock in the middle of a shallow river, washing clothes in Philippine style, which is placing the clothes on a rock, and with a huge stick pounding them vigorously. Her black hair was coiled in a knot on the top of her head, and a bright red piece of calico was wrapped round her graceful young figure from her armpits to a little below her knees. He recalled how ridiculously

jealous he became of an old caribao which lolled in a deep pool, shaded by overhanging bamboo trees, and blinked sleepily at her. All this he saw in his mind's eye, as if he were looking upon the scene at the present moment. And then his joke about the caribao—what had it been? He couldn't remember; but he could almost hear her musical young voice ring out with laughter.

The next two months—ah, yes! he remembered them well! For it was then that he wooed Manuela. He remembered how her fascinating little ways and odd superstitions had been a source of affectionate amusement to him, and how once more he began to take heart in his work, and for a time almost forgot about home and Alicia. And the day he took Manuela into Zamboanga and married her—what a place that day held in his memory!

Wallace recalled sadly that he had never told his family or Alicia of his marriage. It would have been too severe a blow, he had thought, to those New England people. He had hoped, though, to tell them some time. He remembered how he had upbraided himself for being ashamed of the woman he had chosen for his wife, and how each time he started to write



home of his marriage the words, "Your wife is not white!" would hammer madly upon his ear-drums, and finally he would tear up the unfinished letter. He thought he should never forget the day, when in Zamboanga he had accidentally overheard the remark, "He can't be much. He married a native!"

Then Wallace recalled his fruitless attempts at educating Manuela, at making her like the women he was accustomed to associate with. And how hard the poor little thing tried to learn! But it was all in vain. It just was not in her! He realised now that the inevitable must have happened. And he could almost feel this very moment those first pangs of regret at having married Manuela.

The day the baby was born came rushing back into Wallace's mind. He almost hated the little thing, because he had felt then that he was doomed to remain in the Islands with his child. He could not abandon his own child! But his wife? And with the thought of her he returned from his reminiscences with a start, and once more faced the question which had been bothering him for the past six months. In spite of the boy, should he or should he not do as so many other whites who married natives

had done? That would be to leave his wife in the Islands, with a monthly allowance until she married again. The abandoned wife returns to her family to live, and they are glad to welcome her back accompanied by a neat little allowance. The thought of deserting Manuela grated harshly on his conscience, but there seemed nothing else to do unless he was willing to remain in the Islands, working on a barely paying proposition, for Buena Suerte did not live up to its name. The thought of taking Manuela with him to the States he always quickly dismissed from his mind. He had not the requisite moral sense to face his relatives and friends at home with a little brown, uneducated wife, whose father spent his days knee-deep in the mud of the rice paddies, driving about a caribao hitched to a plow.

Dejectedly Wallace rose from his chair, and with hands in his pockets and head bent forward, he paced the floor of his little study, all the while thinking, thinking. He was a tall, well-built man of twenty-nine, with brown hair, blue eyes, decisive chin; but with rather a cruel mouth. It was the one feature which kept his face from being very handsome.

Worried, despondent, Wallace left his study

and went to his room. Going to his trunk, he took out a bundle containing photographs of his friends. There was really only one picture he wanted, and that was Alicia's. His old love for her seemed to be returning with overwhelming power. He must have spent fifteen minutes gazing at the picture before he was aware of someone's presence in the room. Turning, he saw Manuela standing in the door, her eyes filled with tears. He thought she had been spying upon him, so he demanded hotly:

"What do you want? Why don't you let a person know when you enter a room?"

"I thought you called," she faltered.

Wallace knew this was a lie, and he said cruelly:

"Come over here! I've got something to show you!" He took Alicia's picture from the trunk where he had thrown it on seeing Manuela, and thrusting the picture before his wife's eyes, continued, "See this girl? She is the girl I once hoped to marry. A nice white girl! And I am going back to her *soon*. That's all!"

Poor little Manuela! It was not her fault that Wallace was so unhappy. She did all she could to please him. The trouble rested with

him; he should never have married her. She left the room crying.

The next day Wallace repented of the way he had treated her the night before, and did his best to be pleasant. But what had happened had opened Manuela's eyes to the real condition of affairs. She had made up her mind she would keep him with her—and she knew how!

At dinner that night Manuela had on the table what she said was a surprise for her husband. It was a native wine called *tuba*. Wallace was a very moderate drinker, and being careful to use liquor very slightly in the hot Philippines, he at first refused the drink. He had heard that *tuba* spelled ruin to a white man. But upon her telling him she had diluted it with cocoanut milk, he yielded. True, there was cocoanut milk in the beverage, but very little!

In two months' time Wallace was mad for *tuba*. Whenever he attempted to go without it his body seemed to cry out for it, and he would become mean and brutal. He would swear at Manuela and threaten to leave for the States. Then Manuela would calm him by giving him more *tuba*.

Fortunately for Richard Wallace, he fell

ill with a bad case of dysentery, and was removed to the army hospital—the only one in Zamboanga. He was desperately ill for two months, and by the time he was well again he had outgrown his maddening desire for *tuba*. He realised how near to ruin he had been. Upon his return to the plantation he vowed never to touch another drop of the liquor.

And now he had almost made up his mind to leave the Islands for good; to leave Manuela who loved him so that she would rather see him go to ruin by her side, than let him return to his people.

One night as Wallace sat at his desk trying to do a little work, he heard several faint knocks—Manuela's knocks—on the door.

“Come in!” he cried.

The door opened and Manuela appeared, a tray in her hand. On the tray was a glass containing a grayish liquid.

“See what your little Manuela has brought you. How you must have missed it at the hospital! They wouldn't let me bring you any,” she said, as she daintily placed the glass upon his desk.

Wallace seized the hand that had held the glass, and demanded, his voice quiver-

ing with suppressed rage: "What's in that glass?"

"*Tuba!*" she admitted.

Contemptuously he flung her hand to her side. He rose suddenly, and for a moment appeared about to strike her. Then, mastering his rage, he spoke in a calm, decided voice:

"Manuela, don't you suppose I know why you are offering me this *tuba*? You saw I was getting agitated over something when I entered the house. You feared I was thinking of deserting you. And so to keep me, you decided—as you did some months ago—to make a drunkard out of me; to make me love this *tuba*, to idolise it the way some white wrecks in Zamboanga do, so that for *its* sake I wouldn't leave you and these cursed Islands!"

With a little scream she sank into a chair, thus showing Wallace he had understood her intentions.

"Manuela," he continued, "I leave early to-morrow morning for Zamboanga, where I shall take the 'Seward, for Manila. At Manila I shall make connections for the States and *home*."

Sobbing like a wild, half-crazed person, she fell on her knees at his side, seizing his legs frantically in her arms. She begged him to



forgive her. For the child's sake! She loved him so!

Richard Wallace nearly gave in. He felt like a brute. But he used every atom of will-power to keep himself from yielding to her entreaties. He lifted Manuela to her feet, and called Conchita, an old servant, and a distant poor relation of the girl.

"I will leave you the plantation," Wallace managed to continue, "and will send you monthly fifty dollars American money until you marry again."

"Never!" she screamed. "I will kill myself!" And she fainted in his arms. Poor little half-savage, she had meant no wrong. She had only wanted to keep by her side the man she loved.

Wallace and Conchita carried Manuela to her room. They revived her, but upon regaining her senses, she became hysterical. Wallace left the room, deciding it would be better to leave her alone with Conchita.

He spent the remainder of the night packing frantically. He wanted to get away from the plantation as soon as possible and forget the past five years. Manuela's sobs were hard on his nerves, but towards morning she had almost



ceased crying, and finally she had cried herself to sleep.

But before he left Wallace tiptoed into the nursery to see his baby boy. As he gazed at the little sleeping form with its chubby little thumb in its mouth, he wondered what was in store for the child, *his little boy!* When he was old enough, would he ask about his father? And what would they tell him? Wallace shuddered. Then with a, "May God help you, little fellow!" he left the room. The wrong he was doing stood cruelly and vividly before him. Still, his leaving was for his own good. If he remained in the Islands there would probably be an inglorious end for him; if he returned to America there would still be a chance for him really to do something.

When Wallace reached the little pier of the plantation he found José in the launch awaiting his arrival. There were his trunks, and how good they looked to him! They meant that Wallace was going away somewhere—away from Buena Suerte—and he knew the somewhere was to be his dear old home in America.

Upon the arrival of the launch at Zamboanga the "Seward" had docked, and it lacked only three hours of the ship's sailing time. Wallace

rushed to the steamship office to engage his passage to Manila. To his great disappointment, he found there was not a vacant berth on board. The ship was overcrowded with tourists as it was. Wallace knew the purser, who, he hoped, might be able to hunt up a berth for him somewhere, as pursers are wont to do at the last minute for friends. He *must* obtain passage on the "Seward," as it would be a week at least before another steamer bound for Manila would come to Zamboanga. And what might happen in a week's time filled Wallace with apprehension.

He was about to ascend the steamer's gang-plank when he was aware of a woman descending, so he stepped aside to let her pass.

"Thank you!" she said. The voice made him start and glance up from under his Panama. Their eyes met, and they both stood stock still, overcome with surprise.

"Alicia!" Wallace managed to gasp.

"Richard—Dicky Wallace, I declare! How glad I am to see you!" She seized his limp hand in her fascinating, frank way.

Richard Wallace seemed unable to do anything except stare in astonishment. Here was the girl he had always hoped to marry; the

girl to whom he had failed to write for nearly three years; here she was in the Philippines, she had come to him! And obeying the impulse to clasp her in his arms, he started towards her, but she stepped back. Her withdrawing from his embrace made him realise he had no right to Alicia. He thought of Manuela, and blurted out:

“ You shouldn’t have come! You shouldn’t have come! I’m sorry I did not write.”

Alicia blushed slightly, and awkwardly said: “ You don’t know why I am here, Dicky. It’s—”

Again his old love for her returned with such force that it blinded him to anything else but the thought that she had come to him; to him alone! And he cried, seizing her passionately in his arms:

“ You knew I was in need of you. You guessed I was leading a wretched existence in these God-forsaken Islands, and you have come to me. Bless you! ”

She managed to struggle from him. And to clear matters at once, she said:

“ I am married! I am on my honeymoon! ”

Wallace’s face, which had been flushed with passion, paled. He clenched his fists frantically.

Then he came forward with outstretched hand, saying:

“Congratulations, Alicia! I’m sorry for what I did. Please forgive me. I don’t know why I should have thought what I did after all this time.”

Tears were dimming Alicia’s eyes. “Forgive *me*, Dicky! I should have written you about my marriage; but you suddenly refused to answer my letters—”

“It’s my fault,” he said dryly, with a tinge of disappointment in his voice. “I am also married, and have a baby—a boy.”

“Let me congratulate you, too!”

“N—;” he was about to say “no” when he checked himself. “I married a native. Manuela is her name,” he murmured.

“They are fascinating, these little laughing native women,” Alicia said, to fill an awkward pause.

“We all think that—at *first*!” he burst out.

Alicia looked at him in surprise, and now she noticed the haggard, worn-out look on his face.

At this moment the steamship-agent passed, from whom Wallace had tried to obtain accommodation. “Any luck,” he asked, “about

getting a stateroom from the purser or one of the officers? ”

“ No! ” Wallace answered angrily.

“ Oh, were you wanting to go to Manila on this boat? ” Alicia asked in surprise.

“ Not especially,” he faltered.

“ Let us sit over there on those empty boxes,” she suggested, starting towards the boxes, with Wallace following her.

For some minutes they sat without speaking. They both seemed to have something weighing heavily upon their minds. Wallace noticed how unchanged Alicia was from the last time he had seen her. The dark brown hair and violet eyes were as attractive as ever.

“ You haven’t changed much, Alicia,” he ventured.

“ But you have, Dicky! Pardon my frankness; but we are old friends; and I am going to ask some very personal questions, as some of your remarks have led me to suspect certain things. Perhaps I shall be able to help you.”

After a slight pause, she asked, “ Are you really happy here? Should you like to return home? ”

“ Alicia,” he began, “ I know there is nothing to be pitied more than a person who pities him-

self; but I am going to be frank with you, too. I am most unhappy; and do I want to go home? Home! Yes; I want to go home. Back to the dear old States. Alicia, my soul and body just throb with that desire. I had made up my mind to leave the Islands for good when I met you. Then you told me you were married, and I decided to stay and stick it out here."

"Suppose you had returned and found me single, you wouldn't have asked me to marry you—you having a wife and child here?" she asked in a startled voice.

"Yes. You see out here when a white man marries a native he doesn't usually regard her as a real wife."

"How cruel!" she exclaimed.

Then Wallace told Alicia of the past five years of his life. How at first she had been constantly in his mind, and how hard he had worked, hoping to make good so that he might send for her. How the loneliness of the new land, the failure of Buena Suerte to show promising signs, and how a dozen other little disappointments had made him long for a companion, the kind of a companion a wife is. And how at this juncture Manuela with her quaint, refreshing personality fascinated him into marry-

Silently he turned the doorknob, and closing the door behind him, he tiptoed over to Manuela's bed. The room was fairly dark. He wanted to surprise his wife by awakening her with a kiss. He saw faintly the outline of a figure on the bed. Bending over, he nervously kissed her on the cheek.

The cheek was cold!

For a moment Wallace's heart seemed to stop beating. He snatched a box of matches from his pocket and lighted one. It sputtered, glowed for a second, and then went out. But it gave him time to see all he wanted.

For there on the bed, nestled together, were mother and child—both apparently dead.

The shock was too much for Wallace. He went completely to pieces and cried out and sobbed. Manuela must have killed herself and the child on account of him!

There were footsteps on the porch, and a moment later Juan and his wife, wild-eyed with excitement, rushed into the room, followed by Alicia and her husband, the latter carrying a lamp.

"*Los Moros!*" Juan exclaimed in Spanish. "The Moros, two of them from the village ran *juramentado*, my wife says. They killed Dona



Manuela, her child, and old Conchita, who was caring for the Señora. *Dios mio, Dios mio!*"

Wallace was now silent. He stood motionless in the middle of the room, with eyes fixed upon his dead. As if in a dream, he saw Alicia go over to the bed, and kneel down beside it. He saw her suddenly start, and then gently lift the baby from the bed. A moment later he heard a faint little sob—a baby's sob. With a cry which seemed to come from his very soul, he sprang to Alicia's side, and took the infant from her arms.

"Ricardito!" Wallace exclaimed in a voice infinitely tender, which bespoke the awakened fatherhood in him. "Thank God, little fellow, I have you still! There won't be anything that I won't do for you. No, nothing'll be too good for you—you little image of your mother!"

LEONARD WOOD, JR.















